

INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT

J. B. TIDWELL

Introducing the Old Testament /

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THE OLD TESTAMENT

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INTRODUCING THE OLD TESTAMENT

A Class Book for Sunday School
Teacher Training

J. B. TIDWELL, A.M., D.D., LL.D.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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*To my dear wife
whose faithful and consecrated service
has inspired me to study and
has cleared the way
for the
accomplishment of many tasks
including the writing
of this book*

THIS BOOK MAY BE STUDIED IN CLASS OR INDIVIDUALLY

1. WHEN THE BOOK IS STUDIED IN CLASS

(1) Teachers will conduct the study in their own way. At least one class period should be allowed for each lesson; thus fifteen periods would be required for the completion of the book.

(2) The teacher will conduct a written examination at the close of the study; or preferably, the teacher may submit two tests, one at the close of Chapter VIII and the other on completion of the book. Suggestions in this connection are offered on page 195.

(3) Members of the class will be asked to answer the questions at one sitting without the text-book or help of any kind. The teacher will ask that each pupil sign this statement: "I have neither given nor received help during this examination."

(4) The class teacher will examine and pass upon the papers of the class. A grade of 70 per cent is required for passing.

(5) The teacher will report on blanks prepared for the purpose the names and grades of those who make a passing mark.

2. WHEN THE BOOK IS STUDIED INDIVIDUALLY

Workers who find it impracticable to join a class, or who for any reason prefer to do the work individually, are permitted and encouraged to study the book alone. Individual students will study the book in their own way, and when they wish to stand a test they will apply for sealed questions and full directions. The questions will be selected from the list offered on page 195ff. These tests will be conducted by the Educational Department of the Sunday School Board or the State Board of Missions.

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SCRIPTURE OUTLINE

Name of Chapter	Historical Scripture Passage	Other Scripture Books
1 From Creation to the Fall.....	Gen. 1—3	
2 From the Fall to the Flood.....	Gen. 4: 1—9: 17	
3 From the Flood to Abraham.....	Gen. 9: 18—11: 32	
4 Abraham and Isaac.....	Gen. 12—27	
5 Jacob and Joseph.....	Gen. 28—50	Job
6 The Struggle for Liberty.....	Ex. 1—14	
7 Learning the Principles of National Life.....	Ex. 15—Deut. 34	
8 Their Struggle for a Home.....	Joshua	
9 Their Struggle for National Life	Judges, Ruth, 1 Sam. 1—7	
10 The Kingdom Rises to Its Glory or The Reign of Saul and David	1 Sam. 8—31; 2 Sam. 1 Kings 1—2: 12 1 Chron. 10—29	Psalms
11 Reign of Solomon and Division of the Kingdom.....	1 Kings 2: 18—12: 20 2 Chron. 1—10	Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
12 Two Kingdoms to the Fall of Israel.....	1 Kings 12:21—2 Kings 25:30 2 Chron. 11—29	Amos Hosea Joel Jonah
13 Judah, The Southern Kingdom...	2 Chron. 30: 1—36: 16	Isaiah Micah Jeremiah Zephaniah Nahum Habakkuk
14 Captivity of Judah.....	2 Chron. 36: 17-23	Obadiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
15 Restoration of Judah.....	Ezra, Neh., Esther	Haggai Zechariah Malachi
From Malachi to Christ.....	No Scripture	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Name of Chapter	Between What Events	Between What Dates	No. Yrs.	Scripture Narrative
1 From Creation to the Fall.....	Creation to Fall.....	B.C. 4004(?)—Unknown		Gen. 1—3
2 From the Fall to the Flood.....	Fall to Flood.....	Unknown—B.C. 2348		Gen. 4: 1—9: 17
3 From the Flood to Abraham.....	Flood to Call of Abraham.....	B.C. 2348—B.C. 1921	427	Gen. 9: 18—11: 32
4 Abraham and Isaac.....	Call of Abraham—Blessing of Jacob.....	B.C. 1921—B.C. 1822	99	Gen. 12—27
5 Jacob and Joseph.....	Blessing of Jacob—Descent into Egypt.....	B.C. 1822—B.C. 1706	116	Gen. 28—50
6 The Struggle for Liberty.....	Descent into Egypt—Exodus.....	B.C. 1706—B.C. 1491	215	Ex. 1—4
7 Learning the Principles of Nat'l Life.....	Exodus—Entrance into Canaan.....	B.C. 1491—B.C. 1451	40	Ex. 15—Deut. 34
8 Their Struggle for a Home.....	Entrance to Canaan—Time of Judges.....	B.C. 1451—B.C. 1400	51	Joshua
9 Their Struggle for National Life.....	Time of Judges—Beginning of Kingdom.....	B.C. 1400—B.C. 1095	305	Judges, Ruth, 1 Sam. 1—7
10 The Kingdom Rises to Its Glory.....	Beginning of Kingdom—Solomon's Enthronement.....	B.C. 1095—B.C. 1015	80	1 Sam. 8—31; 1 Kings 1: 1—2: 12; 1 Chron. 10—29
11 Reign of Solomon and Division of the Kingdom.....	Solomon's Enthronement—Division of the Kingdom.....	B.C. 1015—B.C. 975	40	1 Kings. 2: 13—12: 20; 2 Chron. 1—10
12 Two Kingdoms to the Fall of Israel.....	Division of Kingdom—Fall of Israel.....	B.C. 975—B.C. 722	253	1 Kings 12: 21—2 Kings 25: 30; 2 Chron. 11—29
13 Judah the Southern Kingdom.....	Fall of Israel—Captivity of Judah.....	B.C. 722—B.C. 587	135	2 Chron. 30: 1—36: 16
14 Captivity of Judah.....	Captivity of Judah—Return to Jerusalem.....	B.C. 587—B.C. 537	50	2 Chron. 36: 17—23; Many Prophets
15 Restoration of Judah.....	Return to Jerusalem—Malachi—End of Old Testament.....	B.C. 537—B.C. 445	92	Ezra, Neh., Esther
From Malachi to Christ.....	End of Old Testament—Birth of Christ.....	B.C. 445—B.C. 4	441	No Scripture

PERIOD ONE

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE

Time—From Creation to the Call of Abraham

CHAPTER I. From the Creation to the Fall.

CHAPTER II. From the Fall to the Flood.

CHAPTER III. From the Flood to Abraham.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER I

FROM THE CREATION TO THE FALL

Scripture Account: Genesis 1—3

Introduction

- Old Testament History.
- Real History.
- Hebrew History.
- Religious History.
- Period Characterized.
- Period of Direct Administration.
- Period of Innocence.
- Value of These Narratives.
- Spiritual Truths Emphasized.
- Facts Revealed.

Creation

- Form of the Story.
- Problems Solved.
- Six Creative Days.
- Man's Creation.
- Man's Original Condition.
- Man's Home and Occupation.
- Traditions of Creation.
- Creation and Science.
- Permanent Institutions.
- Marriage.
- Work.
- The Sabbath.

Fall

- Importance of the Story.
- The Divine Prohibition.
- The Temptation.
- The Tempter.
- The Temptation.
- The Fall.
- The Hope Offered.
- Traditions of the Fall.

CHAPTER I

FROM THE CREATION TO THE FALL

Genesis 1—3

INTRODUCTION

Old Testament History

1. *Real History.* Old Testament history is real history. It is a collection of narrative, poetry, essays, addresses and stories, which, taken together, tell the story of many centuries of the political, social and religious growth of the world. It uses all human sources of information. Even the plan and work of redemption are unfolded in a historical way, and can be best understood if studied historically. As history it gives us a vast amount of information concerning individual world leaders and concerning the nations, the character of culture, and civilization of the entire world. It lays the basis for the study of universal history and especially the history of such nations as Egypt, Babylon, Phoenicia, Syria, Assyria, Chaldaea, Persia, Greece and Rome.

2. *Hebrew History.* The Old Testament records the history of the Hebrew people who have prolonged their history through thousands of years. It tells us of their origin and ancestry, of their early home and nomadic habits, and shows how, against great opposition, they established the first democratic state known to history. Their long struggle for independence, for a home, for power, for the perpetuation of their religious and social ideals and institutions is one of the most important chapters in all history and deserves to be studied.

3. *Religious History.* While treating the Old Testament as history, we must recognize that it is more than ordinary history. It is a religious history. It traces the upward climb of man to a comprehension of God in His relation to man. It makes a plea for the recognition of God's place in the universe and interprets all history as

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the working out of the perfect purposes of God's benevolent interests in the race. It shows how the world was gradually prepared for the coming of Christ and for the acceptance of Christianity as the final revelation of God. Israel's religious experience parallels all human experience of religion, and the Old Testament record of it will somewhere record a religious attitude like our own and will show us a means of satisfying our religious needs. Some sections of it will have a helpful word for those of every religious condition and will furnish a practical Christian solution of every social, moral and religious problem that may confront us. We are to study it as the basis of the Christian religion and look for the roots of Christianity in it.

Period Characterized

1. *Period of Direct Administration.* This period as a whole extends from the creation to the call of Abraham, and is the longest of all the periods of Bible history. It is called the period of direct administration, because God is represented as dealing with the whole human race as individuals. There is no mediating priest or ruler, as there is in later times, but each person is approached directly. (Genesis 3: 9; 4: 6; 5: 22; 6: 13.)

2. *Period of Innocence.* The period covered by chapter one continues from the creation to the expulsion from the garden. It is called a period of innocence. Adam and Eve, who constituted the whole human race, did not have that sense of shame and guilt that followed their disobedience. God came to them in person and dealt with them on a basis of innocence. But they were under obligation to keep their innocence by obedience to God. Their failure in this test has proven the most destructive of all man's failures; it was the signal for their expulsion from their beautiful home in the Garden of Eden.

Value of These Narratives

1. *Spiritual Truths Emphasized.* The permanent value of this entire period lies in its religious teaching. There is no effort to teach geology or biology or any other of the sciences, but it emphasizes the great spiritual truth that the entire universe and man had their origin in God. There is an effort to elevate the religious and ethical beliefs

and practices of men to a standard that is acceptable to God. In this effort the story indicates the various factors at work in human history and reveals the continuing purpose of God in its development. It impresses us with the religious ideas that one must have in mind, if one reads the Bible with becoming reverence and intelligence. Above all, there is an emphasis upon the sovereignty of God. He is seen as the originating cause of all finite and physical things and as holy and benevolent in His nature. All of it is given as a background, leading up to the call of Abraham, whose family and nation issue in Jesus, who is the chief interest in the entire Bible record.

2. *Facts Revealed.* In emphasizing this general purpose, we are told of the origin of the physical universe, the origin of man, the origin of sin, the origin of judgment upon sin, the origin of civilization and of redemption. We are told of the special creation of man in the image of God, and how both the man and the woman were created without sin. Also we are shown something of God's merciful dealings with them after their sin.

CREATION

Form of the Story

For conciseness, concreteness, picturesqueness and beauty, and for naturalness of method the story of creation is not excelled in all literature. In six brief, beautiful paragraphs it shows how God, as a creative Spirit, acting through successive periods, prepared the world for the residence of man and put him in it. The record then returns to the story of the creation of man, with whom God is especially concerned, and gives more in detail the facts concerning his creation, condition, duties and blessings, along with the danger to which he was exposed.

The first chapter has the rhythm of a great poem with the same refrain at the close of each stanza (verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). It describes an orderly progress of creation according to the will and word of God, and, in beautiful language, shows how the whole universe finds its explanation in God. It is especially a poem about God and His works. The four great verses of the chapter are verses 1, 27, 28, and 31. They describe, or declare, the creative power and work of God, man's likeness to God, his

place in the created universe and the perfection of God's work. These are put at the very beginning of the narrative and furnish a good start for all religious thinking.

Problems Solved

This simple narrative solves the most important and the greatest of the problems about which philosophers have speculated and before which scientists have always stood baffled. Every generation has asked such questions as, What is the origin of the material world? What is the origin of life? What is the origin of sin? The vast difference in the opinions of philosophers and scientists concerning these problems shows how uncertain and how unsatisfactory their theories are. But this brief story answers all these questions. It informs us that matter was not eternal, and that it did not come into existence by chance, but that it was created out of nothing by our eternal God. Incidentally, it sets forth the majesty and glory of God and declares man's dependence upon Him and his obligation to Him. It also explains the origin of sin and all man's ills and death. One word from the inspired record solves the whole problem: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." God is the solution. Accept Him and all else follows. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33: 9).

Six Creative Days

In the first chapter of Genesis we have the general statement that God is the Creator of all things, and we are told of the chaotic condition of all physical nature. Then we are told what was accomplished in each of six creative days. (1) There was the beginning of light and its separation from the darkness. (2) There was the beginning of the firmament or expanse which became as a boundless tent of blue overhead and a separation of the waters which were below the firmament from those that were in it. (3) There was the beginning of the continents, the seas and the lower orders of vegetation. (4) There was the beginning of the sun, moon and stars, which are now visible from the earth. (5) There was the beginning of fish and all marine life, and also of fowls. (6) There was the beginning of land animals, the higher

orders of animal life, and of man. The wonderful activity of God in accomplishing all that is recorded in these six days is suggested by the oft-repeated statements such as, "God created," "God said," "God saw," "God made," "God formed." It is also significant that all of it was "good" and satisfactory to God.

Man's Creation

In the creation of man God was specially active. He formed his body out of the dust of the ground, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and caused him to become a living soul. This soul and its capacities mark him as being in the image of God. The creation of the woman was a supernatural act just as was that of man. She was intended as a helpful companion for man. Being formed out of his body, she could meet his inborn need. There was also a oneness of nature, which formed the eternal ground of marriage. In this creation we are impressed by the fact that the whole Godhead participated. God said let "us" make man. He was putting forth special energy in the creation of life like His own that should have fellowship with Himself.

Man's Original Condition

The original state of man is described in most beautiful and expressive terms. He had every possible advantage for the exercise of his natural capacities and for the realization of his deepest needs. He was created morally upright and pure from all defilement. He was given world dominion, which, but for sin, would soon have put him in control of all world forces. Tasks were provided that would call forth earnest effort and prevent the waste of idle powers. The pair had highly satisfactory fellowship in each other and also the communion and fellowship of God. Not being a sinner, man was not under the power of death and, besides, he had access to the tree of life, which gave him the possibility of an endless life.

Man's Home and Occupation

As soon as man was created God put him in a beautiful garden-home. The name of this garden was Eden, which means "a delight." Though it is minutely described, we do not positively know its location. Most students and

explorers think it lay on the highlands of Armenia, where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers have their rise. Some think it was in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf on the lower Euphrates. In this home of "delight" God caused to grow everything good for food and encompassed gold and other resources sufficient for all man's physical and spiritual needs. There were fruits and flowers, and every charming thing. In the care of the garden and in the work of subduing the physical universe, they found wholesome exercise for their bodies, while their souls were satisfied in the companionship of each other and in the fellowship of God.

Traditions of Creation

The Babylonians, the Phœnicians, the Egyptians and almost all primitive peoples have myths by which they explain the origin of the world. In many of them the resemblance to the Biblical version is so striking that one can hardly believe that they were not kindred stories. Of all these traditions, those having to do with a primitive state of happiness are probably the most striking. Indeed, all seem to think that the world was once purer and better and happier. Hesiod, Virgil, Tibullus, and Ovid all sang of the bright morning of the world. They used legends of the golden age, which corroborate the story of the Paradise of Eden. One story tells how Mardux, the Babylonian god, made the earth and formed man; how he created all living things, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and all grass and reeds and forests; how he caused the moon-god to shine forth, trusted him with the night and set him to determine the days. A tablet recently discovered makes him say, "My blood will I take and bone will I form, I will make man"; and, again, "I will create men, who shall inherit the earth, that the service of the gods may be established and their shrines built." Another story among the Babylonians tells of a primitive hero named Eabani, who was created by a goddess from a bit of clay. He was clad only in long hairy locks and, in a state of savageness, ate and sported with wild animals. Finally, a beautiful woman was sent to him, who, by her charms, succeeded in wooing him away from his strange companions and barbarous life.

Creation and Science

Moses in writing this account had no thought of making a treatise on such subjects as geology, zoology, botany, astronomy, or anthropology, or on any other subject of science. These are all suggested, but are left free for investigation and discovery. The marvel is not that it does not discuss them, but that it follows so closely the facts as we have found them. Among the most important matters indicated are these: (1) Things had a beginning. (2) Nothing came by chance. (3) There is a Creator, who continues to take an interest in the universe and to control it. (4) Everything else was brought into existence for man, who is the crowning work of creation. These facts furnish a basis for scientific research and, so far as our discoveries have progressed, they are in exact harmony with what we have found in nature.

Permanent Institutions

In the garden were set up three permanent institutions that have come down to us and have been important in all ages. (1) Marriage. The creation of the woman was for the very purpose of union with Adam. It provided the basis upon which the two in marriage should become one flesh, and by reason of which a man must "love his wife as his own flesh." It clearly shows monogamy, since there was only one original couple. One who reverently reads this story will be impressed with the sacredness of the true relation between man and woman, the natural protection which woman deserves from man, her fitness to share life with him, and the beauty and wonderful sacredness of true marriage. (2) Work. There was both mental and physical exercise. Man named the animals and cared for the garden. Because of sin, toil has become irksome, but it was intended from the first that we should work. It is good both for our health and for our morals. (3) The Sabbath. This also comes to us out of paradise and is a part of God's original plan for us. He not only rested on that day, but hallowed and blessed it. He made it a symbol of the eternal rest. If there was work, there must be rest, and the Sabbath is, therefore, designed to serve the best physical and spiritual interests of man. By His own example and by direct command, God has decreed

that we shall both work and rest. The Sabbath involves rest, worship and service to both God and man.

FALL

Importance of the Story

The chief interest of this whole Biblical story centers in the incidents we are here considering. Only a minor importance attaches to the science or history, as such, which underlie all of it. Little concern is aroused as to where Eden was located: but eternal interests are involved in man's first probation, in his temptation and fall, and in the promise of redemption described in this chapter.

Men are conscious that they are sinners. They know that all the world has gone wrong and they are asking the questions: "How did sin originate?" "Is God the author of sin?" "Can man redeem himself?" "How can God save man?" "How did salvation begin to be revealed?" These questions, in one form or another, lie at the root of all religions and make the story of Adam's sin a story of enduring interest. Indeed, all the rest of the Bible is a revelation of the issues raised here.

Taken in connection with the story of creation, the record here shows that sin was not a part of God's original creation, but that it came through the influence of an evil being, who led man to disobey God. It shows how, by warning, God tried to save man from this folly, and how, after the fall, He was ever seeking to save him from the perils and death in which he had involved himself. Moreover, we learn that sin has involved the whole race and is characterized by a spirit of unbelief in God and disobedience to Him.

The Divine Prohibition

One restriction was put upon man. He must respect law, and bring his selfish desires into subjection. God had put him as sovereign over the earth, but he in turn must be in subjection to God, who had thus exalted him. There were in the garden two trees. The fruit of one had the power to give endless life and was the emblem and pledge of the higher and more confirmed state of life that man would receive, if he should exercise his freedom

in the choice of holiness. The fruit of the other had in it power to give death and was designed to test man's obedience.

The command not to eat of it was not a mere threat of punishment, but a statement of an inevitable fact as to the result of eating that fruit. It was given in mercy to warn him and to guard him against the ruin that would follow if he should eat. It was a matter of merciful instruction concerning the evil into which man in his innocence and ignorance might fall.

The Temptation

1. *The Tempter.* The story proceeds on the basis that there was already a race of fallen beings in the universe, and that Satan, the chief of these, had the mysterious power of tempting others to follow him. The narrative before us clearly makes him not simply an evil influence or the personification of sin, but an evil person, who is the very antithesis of God. In the temptation he assumed the form of a serpent, a creature least likely to be suspected, and thus deceived Eve. Throughout the Bible Satan is held to be the very embodiment of all wickedness.

2. *The Temptation.* Satan charges God with falsehood and raises a doubt as to His goodness and wisdom. He raises the question of the fairness and goodness of God in withholding that which would make them "be as gods, knowing good and evil." This temptation appealed to the three most dangerous elements of fleshly nature. (1) It was good for food and so appealed to the cravings of appetite, to the lust of the flesh. (2) It was beautiful to look upon and pleased the æsthetic sense, thereby appealing to the pride of the eye. (3) It had the power to make one wise, even like God, and aroused the desire for knowledge and power. This was an appeal to the pride of life.

Taken as a whole, the temptation was to fall upward; Eve sought to better herself. Such is the fundamental element of all temptations. The motives employed, the satisfaction of the natural appetites, the love for beauty and the desire for knowledge and power, were in themselves worthy, and under other circumstances would have inspired noble and righteous actions. But the sin lay in the fact that she turned her back upon the nobler impulses of

gratitude, love, and duty to God. The whole story, with its suggestion of doubt, impresses us with the fact, everywhere taught in the Scripture, that man's sin had its origin in unbelief.

The Fall

The fearful results of the fall were felt at once. Eve had made the mistake of listening to Satan and of looking upon the forbidden fruit, and now she and Adam had eaten of it. Immediately they were conscious of guilt, saw their own nakedness and were afraid to meet Jehovah. Then came the judgments of God upon them. In her fallen state, the woman was given a place of suffering and subordination. Man was condemned to a life of toil and to final death. By a painful struggle he would wrest a livelihood from the earth and death would be the final sad end of that struggle.

Viewed as a whole, their sin introduced pain and death. Their bodies became subject to pain and decay and death, and they brought a like curse upon all their posterity. Every manifestation of pain, every necessary drudgery, every earthly disorder, whether of storm, or flood, or earthquake, and every grim hour of death, is a fresh declaration of the awful tragedy of Adam's fall. Moreover, the story is full of the teaching that these two were responsible for the sin which they had committed, and for the far-reaching results of it. They were representatives of the race, and illustrate what goes on in every human life; clearly we, not God, are responsible for our sin. And, more, the incident declares that, no matter what his condition of birth, or his state of environment, every normal man is clothed with sufficient intelligence and freedom to make him responsible for all his religious choices.

The Hope Offered

The gloom of this sad story of sin and of its result in pain and punishment was somewhat relieved by certain elements of hope. The man and his wife are not beyond the pale of God's love. They are not forsaken of Him, nor left in the conflict with evil without hope of victory. There are three elements of hope. (1) A great promise (3: 15). One would come who would contend with the tempter, crush his head and repair the damage of the fall.

This was accomplished by Jesus on the cross, and He will cast Satan into the bottomless pit, as is described in the Revelation. (2) The coverings of skins of animals. These were suited for their needs and allowed them again to have the fellowship of God. Many writers and students find in this incident a suggestion of the covering of righteousness that comes to guilty sinners through the death of Jesus. (3) An altar of justice and mercy. At the east side of the garden were the cherubim and the flaming sword where, in symbol, abode the presence of "the face of the Lord" (4: 14). This was intended to keep open the way of the tree of life and offer to the sinners salvation through the mercy of God.

Traditions of the Fall

There are many traditions of the fall. A Chaldean legend tells of a dragon who controlled the sea, brought chaos and disorder, opposed the creation of the world and led men to sin. Krishna, a Hindu incarnation of the Almighty, is represented as attacking and destroying the serpent who caused man's sin and suffering, and is seen with his feet on the serpent's head. A Persian tradition tells of a region of bliss where the first man and woman lived in purity and innocence and in perfect happiness, subsisting on fruit, and especially on the fruit of a tree intended to give them immortality. This they did until a demon tempted them to disobey God's command. It explains that the demon caused another tree to spring up in the garden, and by acting through a serpent, persuaded them to eat of its fruit. This fruit corrupted them and put in them such evil dispositions that they began to worship that demon and fell under the power of sin and misery. The Chinese tradition represents man as being at first innocent and happy and as having fallen by an inordinate and wicked desire for knowledge, or through the flattery and temptation of a woman.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER II

FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD

Scripture Account: Genesis 4: 1—9: 17

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- Reign of Conscience.
- Common Parentage of Men.
- Facts of the Period.

Period Before the Flood

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- Cain and Seth—Two Races.
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- Purpose to Destroy.
- Noah, God's Chosen Man.
- The Ark.
- The Flood.
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- Sorrow and Awe of It.
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- The Flood in Tradition and Geology.
- Traditions of the Flood.
- Geological Records.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD

Scripture Account: Genesis 4: 1—9: 17

INTRODUCTION

Reign of Conscience

Man came out of the former period a fallen creature, but possessed of a conscience. He had learned to know good from evil and was under obligation to do the good and refrain from evil. He failed to live up to this requirement, and as a result brought upon himself destruction by the flood. But there was light enough for men to know how to be saved, and some were saved. Enoch pleased God and was translated, and Noah walked with God, and he and his family were saved from the flood.

Common Parentage of Men

This story indicates that all men sprang from a common pair. They began life in a very simple way, and by degrees gained the knowledge of the arts of usefulness and of beauty. All of our experience bears out the Scripture view that human nature, wherever found, is essentially the same. Sin has spread out among all people and has affected all classes in a similar way. The gospel also has manifested similar results in the transformation of the character of people of every degree of intelligence and culture. In this is seen the unity of the race as having a common human ancestor and a divine Creator. This Biblical view is very extraordinary when compared with the narrow view of most ancient nations, which refused to acknowledge kinship with others. But it furnishes the basis for the common rule of one God and is in harmony with the views of most scientists, who now believe that God created man, not men, a single pair, not many pairs, and that all races have sprung from that pair.

Facts of the Period

(1) During this time the race made great progress in civilization and also developed great and unbearable wickedness. (2) A divine judgment in the nature of a flood was sent upon the wicked world. This flood was not a great cataclysm resulting from merely natural causes, but was a judgment of God sent to destroy a sinful people. (3) The righteous found favor in God's sight and were delivered safely from His judgments against the wicked.

PERIOD BEFORE THE FLOOD**First Sacrifice and Murder**

1. *The Men.* Cain and Abel were born to Adam and Eve after their expulsion from the garden and were probably their first children. They were alike in nature, being of the same parentage, and alike in environment, but they differed in occupation, one being a farmer and the other a shepherd. Both seem to have been attentive to worship, but they differed in the offerings presented and in the spirit in which the offerings were made. They represent two types running through all the Bible and, indeed, through all history, the unchecked power of evil and the triumph of faith.

2. *Their Worship.* Both seemed to be sincere worshipers and to have desired the divine approval. Cain brought a thank offering from the field such as Adam and Eve might have made before the fall. It expressed no sense of sin nor desire for pardon. By faith (Heb. 11: 4) Abel brought a sin offering. This probably means that he relied upon the promise and apprehended the truth that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22; 12: 24). One was a humble believer, the other a self-righteous unbeliever. They portray the real spirit of true and false religion as seen in the worshipers of all ages. It was a case of Pharisee and publican at the gate of Eden.

3. *The Murder.* Because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and did not accept his own, Cain became insanely jealous and slew his brother. The true worshiper was persecuted and put to death by the false worshiper. Cain became the first of a long line of blood-stained murderers, and Abel the first of the mighty roll of God's blood-stained martyrs.

heroes. This terrible crime, so soon committed, shows how swift is the growth of sin; only recently a disobedience to God, sin now became a manifestation of violence and bloodshed.

4. *Curse on Cain.* God showed His disapproval of the crime of murder by cursing the ground for Cain and by banishing him from his own land. He showed that the crime of murder should always be punished and that the dangerous and demoralizing influence of the murderer should be removed from among the people. But, in spite of his great crime, God protected Cain from murder by others and probably, thereby, warned us that we are not to persecute or injure any man simply because his religion is false. As a false worshiper in the land of vagabondage, Cain developed a considerable civilization.

Cain and Seth—Two Races

In the death of Abel the true worship of God had a long back-set until the birth of Seth, who had the same spirit. These two, Cain and Seth, became the heads of two races so different that the former is called the sons of men and the latter the sons of God.

1. *Descendants of Cain.* These became an enterprising, but ungodly, race, devoted to the arts of civilization, to manufacture, to building cities and to worldly comfort and success in the pursuit of earthly good. We are given the names of six outstanding men of this race, the last being Lamech, in whom the Cain-spirit of the brutal triumph of the sword is personified. He married two wives, thus originating the practice of polygamy, and committed gross murder (4: 19, 23). The Cain line gives us two lessons: (1) that material civilization is not a divine gift, but a purely human development: (2) that civilization is not religion and cannot be substituted for it.

2. *Descendants of Seth.* Seth was chosen as the head of the spiritual branch of mankind. His race was to be the instrument of the world's religious uplift and ultimate redemption. This race was less ardent in worldly pursuits, but gave birth to men like Enoch, who walked with God, and Noah, who was chosen to build the ark and perpetuate the race, and to be the one through whom the Saviour should come. In the records of this race ten names are given, ending in Noah, and we are given such suggestive

statements, as, "Men began to call upon the name of the Lord," and "Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him." Here is suggestion of both divine fellowship and blessed immortality.

3. *Long Lives.* We do not know the explanation for the great age to which these antediluvians lived. Originally man's body was not subject to death, and when it became so by sin the process of decay may have been less rapid at first. Certainly it had not been long affected by hereditary disease and vicious indulgence. It may have been a merciful provision for the rapid increase of the race and for the spread of knowledge and art. God's revelations could be better preserved. Noah could have known the personal friends of Adam, and after the flood could have given first-hand information concerning such matters as the fall.

Antediluvian Civilization

1. *Civil Progress.* The Biblical record of the antediluvians is very brief; it clearly teaches that they were not savages, but had attained a considerable degree of civilization. There were cities (Gen. 4: 17), tentmakers and herdsmen (Gen. 4: 20), musicians (4: 21) and metallurgists (4: 22). But before there could be tents there must be material and skill and labor in preparing the material. The building of cities required builders and tools and material and architecture. Musicians require instruments, which cannot be made without tools and material. Brass and iron required that there be mines and smelters. These suggestions indicate something of their great development.

2. *Great Wickedness.* Their wickedness beggars all description. There was forgetfulness of God. The Cainites left God out of their thoughts and proved that science and art and civilization apart from religion do not purify the heart and save society from corruption. Social sins were rampant. The lust of Lamech led him to take two wives (Gen. 4: 19), and thus to introduce the baneful practice of polygamy. The godly sons of Seth became enamored of the godless daughters of Cain. There was murder and violence. The writer repeats to us the blood-song of victorious Lamech to his two wives (Gen. 4: 23) and also tells us that "the earth was full of violence" (Gen. 6: 11). Sinful imaginations were the rule. So evil had men become

that in all of their thoughts evil had become the master of the meditations and purposes of their hearts.

THE FLOOD

Purpose to Destroy

It was the great wickedness already described and particularly the evil growing out of the intermarriage of Sethites with the Cainites that led God to determine upon the destruction of the whole wicked race (6: 7) and to set the time of the flood at one hundred and twenty years. He sent Noah to preach "righteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 5) and warned men of the danger to which their immorality and corruption were subjecting them. This again showed forth His mercy and long-suffering toward the sinner. It also showed that He will finally punish the wicked.

Noah, God's Chosen Man

Noah is one of those rare men whose names are associated with great epochs. He was a heroic figure in an apostate age, who had the courage to stand alone and dared to lead where but few followed. The Bible says he found favor in the eyes of Jehovah (Gen. 6: 8). At his birth his father, Lamech, who was a godly man, was seized with a spirit of inspiration and saw in him the hope of deliverance from the toil growing out of the curse placed upon Adam for his sin. He, therefore, named him Noah, which means "rest." He was a just and perfect man who walked with God (Gen. 6: 9; 7: 1; see 1 Pet. 3: 20; Heb. 11: 7). He saved his own family and was the first man who, through his own righteousness and work, saved others from destruction. In this he became a type of Jesus who saves us from God's wrath.

The Ark

The building of the ark was at the command of God, who gave full details as to the size and materials. It was a box-like boat, three stories high, five hundred and twenty-five feet long, eighty-seven and a half feet wide, and fifty-two and a half feet deep. Its construction was a huge undertaking, but not one beyond the resources of the times, nor out of harmony with the extraordinary capacity

of the early peoples for colossal works. In building it Noah both warned the people of the time and gave expression to his faith in the revealed purpose of God. Into the ark went Noah and his family and all kinds of animals and creeping things and fowls, as well as food suitable for all. In this there was provision for the perpetuation of all species and for worship when the flood was over. Nothing outside of the ark was saved, but everything in it was saved. It is, therefore, a figure of the saving work of Christ.

The Flood

1. *The Flood Itself.* The flood was an act of judgment on the part of God. It was brought about by two natural causes, forty days of incessant rain and the breaking up of the fountains of the deep. But it was not simply a natural cataclysm. It was a divine judgment, and the use of natural means, instead of destroying the miracle of it, shows that God still controls the forces of the earth He created. It covered at least all the inhabited portions of the earth and lasted one year and ten days, seven months before the ark rested and five months and ten days more before the ransomed company went forth from the ark (Gen. 7: 11; 8: 14).

2. *Sorrow and Awe of It.* There is no description of the horrors of the flood. We can imagine those outside of the ark trying to get out of reach of the rising waters, but nothing could deliver them from the destruction which God had determined against sin. Everywhere there was defeat and death. There was an awful stillness and desolation, a vast expanse of ocean with not a sound of life, only the low moan of the surging waters. And what solemn feelings must have prevailed in the ark! This ransomed family, conscious of the destruction which had been brought on the outside, must have felt a holy awe of God; when they remembered their own escape surely they were filled with wonder and praise. Their sense of humility and unworthiness and of utter dependence in the hands of the great God was no doubt overwhelming.

The Rainbow Covenant

Upon leaving the ark, Noah erected an altar to Jehovah and offered thereon a sacrifice, consisting of victims of every clean beast and bird. It was a burnt offering and

was intended to express his gratitude and devotion to Jehovah. This sacrifice pleased God, and He determined that the earth should never see a like destruction (Gen. 8: 21, 22). He then made a new covenant with Noah (Gen. 9: 1-17). All things were made subject to him, as they were to Adam at first. He was allowed to eat animal as well as vegetable food, was assured of the regularity of the seasons and was promised that there should never be "any more flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9: 11). The sacredness of life was indicated by the announcement of a death penalty for murder. The rainbow was made the pledge of all the promises. Its presence across a dark cloud would assure men against the fear of a flood and would be a memorial to remind God of His merciful covenant. Thus the race started anew, a saved group, rescued by the faith of Noah and protected by the divine favor and blessing.

The Flood in Tradition and Geology

1. *Traditions of the Flood.* The flood left a deep and enduring impression on the whole race and has found a large place in the traditions and legends of each of the great races of mankind. As might be expected, these traditions have been most accurate in the countries that were nearest to where the ark rested. While there are many other such traditions, those of Babylon, Greece, China and America are the most important. In a general way these agree with the Biblical story in the following particulars: (1) that because of its wickedness the evil world was destroyed by a flood; (2) that one righteous family was saved in a boat and that animals were saved with them; (3) that the boat in which they were saved landed on a mountain; (4) that a bird was sent out of the boat; (5) that the saved family immediately upon leaving the boat built an altar and worshiped God with a great sacrifice. All of these stories tend to corroborate the Biblical story, and to show that the whole race must have sprung from this common home.

2. *Geological Records.* Geologists have done much to confirm the story of the flood. They have discovered in the earth such evidence of the destruction of animal life as to indicate a widespread flood. They are acquainted with many cases of sudden elevations and depressions of

the earth and the inrushing of the sea upon the depression that may correspond to the breaking up of the fountains of the deep referred to in the Scripture (Gen. 7: 11). For four hundred years the coast of Greenland has been gradually sinking for a distance of six hundred miles. In 1882 an earthquake elevated a long section of the coast of Chile several feet. The fact that it is thus "within the range of natural phenomena" does not destroy the miraculous nature of the flood. It came just when Noah had completed the ark and entered into it, and just when God said it would come. That made it a miracle. Another confirmation offered by geology is the fact that all of the great district east of Ararat bears evidence of having been under water.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER III

FROM THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM

Scripture Account: Genesis 9: 18—11: 32

Special Matters

- Period of Human Governments.
- Purpose of the Story.
- Ararat and the Cradle of the Race.
- Man's New Career.
- Noah's Shame and Prophecy.
 - The Shame and Prophecy.
 - The Prophecy Fulfilled.
- Messianic Race.

Tower of Babel

- Location of It.
- Purpose of It.
- Overthrow of It.
- Traditions of It.

Ancient Civilizations

- Earliest Civilizations.
- Two Great Empires.
 - Babylonian or Chaldean Empire.
 - Egyptian Empire.
- Business Organization and Commerce.
- Language and Literature.
- Religious Motive of Their Civilization.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM

Scripture Account: Genesis 9: 18—11: 32

SPECIAL MATTERS

Period of Human Governments

In the garden, Adam and Eve were innocent, but they failed to keep their innocence, and brought upon themselves and all the race the penalty of death. Outside the garden, they were dealt with upon the basis of conscience, and the whole race failed to measure up to the standard of what they knew to be right and brought upon themselves the flood. Now they are divided into nations and are allowed to try to keep their purity by means of human governments. In this, they utterly fail. They develop nations that attempt to thwart the purpose of God in them, and because of their corrupt moral and religious life again fall under His displeasure. This failure led to the new venture in Abraham, which will be the theme of the next period.

Purpose of the Story

The chief aim of these narratives is to explain the origin of different languages and nationalities, and to point out the place of Israel in the great family of nations. The genealogical table is of vast historical significance, and as far as it extends it furnishes the central and continuous thread of ancient history. The nations least closely related to Israel are named first. While saying nothing about the mission of Israel, it looks toward the bringing of all nations into the Kingdom of God. At first Israel is one of the sisterhood of nations and later is selected to bear a special part in the history of redemption.

Ararat and the Cradle of the Race

Mount Ararat, where the ark rested and where Noah and his sons went forth to repeople the cleansed earth,

probably lay just west of the Garden of Eden. Thus the second beginning of the race, under Noah, was in the same general territory as was the first beginning, under Adam. This part of western Asia is, therefore, distinguished as the birthplace and cradle of the race. Within four hundred miles of Haran, which is the center of this district, arose the following great movements and peoples of the early times. (1) The first and second start of the race at Eden and Ararat. (2) Babylon and Nineveh, the early sites of learning and science. (3) Mesopotamia, where God revealed Himself to Abraham and called him to his great work. (4) Phoenicia, where arose a great and varied commerce and many of the arts of peace. (5) Palestine, the home of the chosen people, the birthplace of innumerable prophets and apostles and evangelists, and the scene of the birth, labors and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. (6) Tarsus, where Paul the great apostle was born and reared. (7) The most of Asia Minor, where the apostles spent so much of their labors.

Man's New Career

There is something inspiring about the new position of Noah. He and his family had a new start. They knew that the flood resulted from sin, and that they were saved by divine grace, and, therefore, knew God, both as one who punishes the impenitent wicked and saves those who believe. These experiences with sin and grace would deepen their fear of God and their conscious obligation to serve and worship Him. This, together with the fact that all the evil people were destroyed out of the world and only the righteous left, would lead us to hope that men would abide in righteousness and that there would be no more wickedness in the race. But alas! it is man's nature to go astray from God, and soon there is sin everywhere, and the displeasure of God was upon him.

Noah's Shame and Prophecy

1. *The Shame and Prophecy.* After the flood, Noah became a husbandman, and on one occasion fell under the intoxicating influence of the wine which he had made. Here is a sad picture. This great man lay in his tent naked and helpless under the power of sin. While in this condition he was discovered by his sons, one of whom seemed to rejoice in his shame, while the others attempted

to conceal his humiliation. Because of this, Noah, in a spirit of prophecy, pronounced upon his sons and their descendants the punishment and rewards which their spirit and deeds merited. The descendants of Ham were to be a servile race; those of Shem were to be blessed with the presence of God in their tents; those of Japheth were to be enlarged, meaning that they should become the greatest of peoples.

2. *The Prophecy Fulfilled.* In a very remarkable way all these prophecies have been fulfilled. (1) While the descendants of Ham had an early glory and power as Babylonians, Egyptians and Canaanites, they have now long been known only as the Ethiopian or black-skinned African and have occupied the place of weakness, degradation and servitude predicted for them. (2) In harmony with Noah's prophecy, Shem's descendants were signally blessed. They long held Asiatic supremacy. The Hebrews conquered the Canaanites (descendants of Ham), became the chosen nation of God and finally gave us the oracles of God and the Christ. (3) Out of Japheth came the Scythians, Iberians, Thracians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans and all the great modern races, such as the Britons, Russians and Germans. In harmony with Noah's prophecy, they have spread themselves over the entire globe, and now for twenty-four hundred years have been the ruling peoples of the world.

Messianic Race

It is the purpose of the author of Genesis to make prominent the Messianic race. In the genealogy of chapter 5 we are given the line of Seth from Adam to Noah; in that of Gen. 11: 10-26, together with the discussion of Terah (11: 27-32), we continue that line through Shem from Noah to Abraham. Each table has ten names and shows the development of true religion along the line of men of faith who have received the promise of Jehovah. The promised Messiah, who was to bruise the serpent's head, is the Star of Hope which stands at the dim and distant end of the line in which Enoch and Noah and Abraham are the outstanding figures.

TOWER OF BABEL

Location of It

The location of the tower was somewhere on the plain of Shinar, which was the name given by the early Hebrews to the land of Babylon (Gen. 10: 10; 14: 9; Isa. 11: 11; Dan. 1: 2; Zech. 5: 11), but the exact place cannot be determined with certainty. The city of Babylon was long thought to be the place of the tower, but later two great mounds have been considered the probable location. (1) The Temple of Marduk. This is a great mound on the east side of the Euphrates. It has a huge, pyramid-like foundation and represents a great temple. (2) Biris Nimrood. On the west side of the Euphrates there is a vast mound, called Biris Nimrood, that used to be regarded as the ruins of this Biblical tower. It was built of brick, oblong in form, and measured seven hundred yards around, and rose to a height of one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. It consisted of seven stages or stories. Beginning at the bottom, they were painted black, orange, bright red, golden, pale yellow, dark blue and silver, representing, respectively, the colors which the Sabeans thought appropriate for Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon. These marks may indicate the prevalence of idolatry in that time and they have led some to think that the Tower of Babel was intended to do honor to the gods of Babylon.

Purpose of It

All that was purposed in this tower is difficult to determine. Josephus said it was intended to save men from another flood and so expressed doubt of God's covenant with Noah. The Scripture (11: 4) indicates that it was to make men a great name and to prevent their being scattered abroad. Here was an unholy pride and a selfish desire for renown. In Genesis 11: 6 God says, "Nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." God was plainly offended and indicates that they are at cross purposes with Him. In some way it was an act that defied God, and deserved punishment.

Overthrow of It

The failure of its completion is attributed to divine intervention. God, in His wrath, came down and confused their tongues and scattered them abroad. No longer able

to speak the same language, they could not co-operate in carrying out their plans. Different languages is here explained as a punishment of the race for rebellion against God. Sin brought many tongues, and redemption, as was indicated at Pentecost, can and will make them all one again.

Traditions of It

While there are traditions of the tower in many countries, those found in Babylonia and Greece will be sufficient to indicate their general content. In Babylonia, there was a tradition, that not long after the flood men were tall and strong and became so puffed up that they defied the gods and tried to erect a lofty tower, by means of which they could scale heaven. But when it reached the sky, the gods sent a mighty wind and turned the tower over. This tradition also says that hitherto all men had used the same language, but that at this time there was sent upon them a confusion of many tongues, from which confusion the tower was called Babel. A Grecian legend says that a race of giants piled Mount Ossa upon Pelion in an attempt to reach Mount Olympus, which was supposed to be the residence of the gods; but the gods interfered with their plans and scattered the impious conspirators. This effort of the Titans to mount up to the heavens corresponds so well to the motive of the builders of the tower as to indicate that the stories had a common origin.

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Earliest Civilizations

Just when and where civilization began, we have no means of telling. The story of the confusion of tongues hints at it. From the monuments and engraven vases that have been found in such unearthened cities as Nippur, we now know that in ages long before Abraham and Moses the world had made great advancement in culture, commerce, law and religion. From such sources it is clear that long before their time there was a most complete and complex civilization. These discoveries confirm what the Bible itself would imply, that they did not live in a crude and undeveloped age, but in an age of great progress.

Two Great Empires

It is impossible to tell which of two great nations, the Babylonians or the Egyptians, first attained a high state of civilization. The Babylonians dwelt on the plains of the Euphrates; the Egyptians on the plains skirting the banks of the Nile. They seem to have made about equal progress in all the arts of civilization.

1. *Babylonian or Chaldean Empire.* Its founder is declared to have been Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, who was a great hunter and whose exploits seem to have won for him the throne. He began his reign at Babel, but he had a number of other cities on the plain of Shinar. Later he went out into the district of Assyria and built Nineveh and a number of other cities. From Assyrian and Chaldean inscriptions, we have learned much of the Arcadians, whose influence carried forward that early civilization. We thereby confirm the Biblical claim that it was under Nimrod, the Cushite, and not through the Semitic race, that the Chaldean kingdom began.

2. *Egyptian Empire.* So far as the records of the Scripture or of the earliest records of the monuments bear witness, Egypt comes before us full grown. The further back we go, the more perfectly developed do we find the organization of the country. The activity and industry of the Egyptians, their power of erecting great buildings and of executing other powerful feats of labor at this early period, is the marvel of all ages. It has been shown by Prof. Petrie that some of the blocks of stone, at least in one of the great pyramids, were cut by the use of tubular drills, fitted with diamond points, or with something similar. With us this is a very modern invention.

At least thirty dynasties of kings (according to Manetho) ruled in Egypt in succession, and at least twelve of these dynasties must have reigned before Jacob and his sons settled within their borders. Many of the great monuments and some of the largest of the pyramids were already to be seen before Abraham visited that country. They had made constant progress in all kinds of learning and art, and a highly developed society and government had been attained when they are first noted in Bible history.

Business Organization and Commerce

Two thousand years before Moses there were sculptors, bricklayers, smiths, carpenters, masons, miners, leather-workers, potters and jewelers, and most of them were organized into guilds or unions. Great merchants and bankers loaned money at a high rate of interest, and laws had been enacted to control and protect all business. Extensive commerce was carried on, both on land and on sea. Streams of caravans, on their way between Egypt and Babylon, passed through Canaan and made it a place of trade, in touch with world interests. Treaties were made between the different states whereby these caravans were protected and given safe passage through the countries traversed. Three thousand years before Christ, the Phœnicians sent ships from their ancient city of Tyre, and had communication with England. They also sailed around Africa and traded on the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Egypt sent expeditions to South Africa in the sixteenth century before Christ. All of this suggests how much more of geography the ancients knew than we are accustomed to think. It shows also their ability to organize and carry forward great and far-reaching commercial enterprises.

Language and Literature

We know nothing of the origin of language, but both the Bible (in the story of Babel) and modern research declare that all peoples once spoke the same language, and that varieties of tongues arose from some remarkable cause. There are three great families of languages—the Semitic, the Turanian, and Aryan—and these correspond, roughly, to the sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japheth.

We are also ignorant of the origin of writing. As far back as we can go in history, we find already developed a most complex system of writing. There were schools and colleges, great dictionaries and books on many subjects. There were large libraries, both in royal cities and in small towns. The Babylonian language was almost universally used and could be read anywhere. This unity makes it comparatively easy for scholars to-day to translate inscriptions on the monuments.

Religious Motive of Their Civilization

It is not difficult to find the motive of their civilization. They built their empires and great cities and exhibited all this wonderful skill from a religious motive. Everything in social and political life, and even in trade and manufacture and war, was prompted by religion. The great mounds on the plain of Shinar and the pyramids of Egypt all had a religious purpose, and are the eternal monuments of the religious devotion of these ancient people. Their religion was, however, filled with all sorts of idolatrous abuses, and God called Abraham to inaugurate a pure religious life and to be the father of a people from whom would come the Great Revealer of all religious truth.

PERIOD TWO

THE HEBREW FAMILY

Time—From the call of Abraham to the descent into Egypt

CHAPTER IV. Abraham and Isaac.

CHAPTER V. Jacob and Joseph.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER IV

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Scripture Account: Genesis 12—27

Abraham and His Experiences

- Conditions of the Times.
 - Outwardly.
 - Inwardly.
- Purpose of the Narrative.
- Hebrew Civilization.
- Abraham's Names and Early Life.
- Abraham's Call.
 - To Separation from Kindred and Native Land.
 - To Service.
 - To Found a Nation.
 - To Be the Father of a Son.
- The Divine Covenant.
- Abraham's Wanderings.
- Abraham and Lot.
- Waiting for the Promised Son.
- Character of Abraham.

Isaac and His Experiences

- His Early Experiences.
 - His Childhood.
 - Offered in Sacrifice.
- His Marriage to Rebekah.
- His Two Sons.
 - The Sons.
 - The Patriarchal Blessing.
 - Jacob Receives the Blessing.
 - A Dark Story.
 - Character of Isaac.

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CHAPTER IV

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

Scripture Account: Genesis 12—27

ABRAHAM AND HIS EXPERIENCES

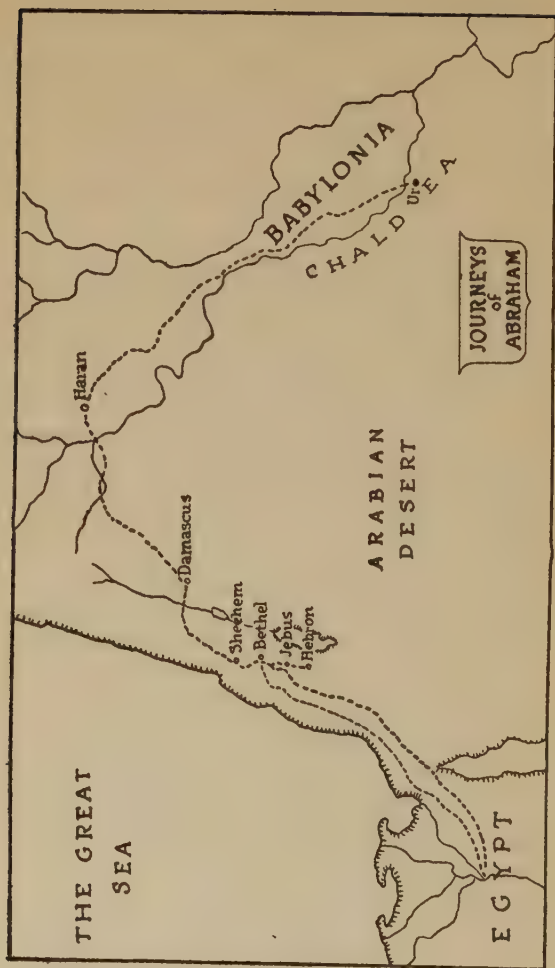
Conditions of the Times

1. *Outwardly.* Outwardly there was a splendid civilization, with great cities and temples and libraries. "There were workers in fabrics, metals, stones, implements and ornaments." Time was divided as it is now, and sun-dials showed the time of day. Great systems of canals existed and the land was in a high state of cultivation. The pyramids were already old and a great stone wall had been built across the Isthmus of Suez to prevent immigrants and enemies from coming down from the north. In Tyre and Sidon there were great glass works and dye factories. There were vast harbors crowded with sea-going ships, and luxurious living was found everywhere.

2. *Inwardly.* In the midst of this prosperity, there existed an inward moral corruption, which was hastening the nations to decay and to a ruin, such as still amazes all the world. Ur of the Chaldees, the birthplace and home of Abraham, was the seat of the great temple of the moon-god, and this sanctuary became so famous that the moon-god became known throughout all northern Syria as the Baal or Lord of Haran. The bad state of the times is suggested by the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, which cities were probably typical of the entire civilization of the time. In Canaan, there were hundreds of gods, each called Baal, and each having his own shrine.

Purpose of the Narrative

Out of such a time and civilization, God called Abraham and made him the instrument in the founding of a new nation and a new civilization that would serve God. He deposited with him and his descendants His truth and the hopes of the race till Jesus should come. He chose for



their home the geographical center of the ancient world, so that His revelations to them would soon be known everywhere.

Here, then, we cease to study the general history of the whole race, and follow the story of one man, and the family and nation that descended from him. The stream of history narrows down to a single race, the Hebrews, and grows continually fuller to the end. We deal now with the family, the father being the head. We, therefore, call it the period of the Hebrew family.

Hebrew Civilization

Two things may be said about the Hebrew civilization of that time. (1) It was patriarchal in government. This was probably true of other people of that time. The father held a place of supreme importance and power. He was absolute ruler of the family and made all plans for his family, even for his married children. He was military leader and could lead his children and servants into battle. He was the family priest and made the family sacrifices and led their worship. He was the family prophet, who received and communicated to them the will of God. (2) It was Nomadic in habits. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob founded no cities, but lived in tents and moved from place to place. They had no settled home, but had one in prospect. They were not aimless or lawless or barbarian. There was no marauding or plundering, but always there was manifested the highest type of civil righteousness. They touched the greatest civilization of their times and were everywhere a genuine help to all whom they touched.

Abraham's Names and Early Life

The name Abram, by which he was originally designated, means "high father" or "father of elevation." This may have indicated the conception of him which his parents held, or the esteem and reverence in which he was held by the people in general. As a token of special divine approval, God subsequently changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude." His father was named Terah, and he had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. Nahor died, leaving a son named Lot, whose life was later connected very closely with that of Abraham. He was born in Ur of the Chaldeans only a short distance below

Babylon. It was also at Ur that he secured his beloved wife, Sarah, and that he received the call and promise of God (Acts 7: 2-4). He was a wealthy shepherd and, with his father and family, he started to Canaan.

Abraham's Call

The call of Abraham was the most important religious event since the fall of man, and was, in fact, a new starting point for a genuine religion.

1. *It was a call to separation from kindred and native land.* He was a shepherd-farmer, with large flocks and herds, and with a number of slaves. The family was, no doubt, one of high rank in his country, and certainly there was in his family a warm family affection. He did not, as did many of his countrymen, migrate to the regions of the Mediterranean for the sake of gain, but in obedience to a divine call, and for conscience' sake, he came, somewhat as the Pilgrim Fathers, who forsook the ties that bound them in England and sailed to America in the Mayflower.

2. *It was a call to service.* The people of his time were rapidly falling into idolatry. Even Terah his father was an idolator and was reputed to have been a maker of images. Abraham was called to serve the true and living God, and was to enter into covenant-relations with God, and to stand alone with Him for principle where all social and national customs were hostile.

3. *It was a call to found a nation.* God promised to make him a great nation that should have as its main purpose the service of the one true God. Ruin was about to come to all the nations of Abraham's time, and God had prepared him, and in him a spiritual nation that should produce a new and godly civilization which was to outlast Egypt and Babylon.

4. *It was a call to be the father of a son.* In Genesis 17: 16 God promised him a son, Isaac, in whom his seed should be called (21: 12), and of him was to come the blessing of all nations. This was the promise of Christ, through whom all the nations of the earth have been blessed. Just as in Isaac Abraham became the head of a great people that should be as the sand of the sea for number, so in Jesus he should be the head of a great spiritual seed that should be in number as the very stars of heaven.

The Divine Covenant

The call of Abraham was accompanied by a promise or covenant that was wholly dependent upon the faithfulness of God and guaranteed that Abraham should be a blessing to all nations. This covenant contained four promises.

(1) A great nation; fulfilled in the Hebrew people. (2) A great name; fulfilled in that Hebrews and Christians and Mohammedans, all call him their great religious father. (3) A land; fulfilled in the possession of Canaan by the Hebrews. (4) A blessing to all nations. This, through the preaching of the gospel, is still in the process of fulfillment. God often repeated His promise and covenant to Abraham, as in Gen. 12: 1-7; 13: 14-17; 15: 1-21; 17: 1-8; 18: 18; 22: 16-18. He also frequently renewed it to his descendants, as to Isaac, in Gen. 26: 1-5, and to Jacob, in Gen. 28: 10-15.

Abraham's Wanderings

By faith Abraham proved himself worthy of founding a race which would serve the purposes of God. When he was called he "went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11: 8), and lived a life of migrations. (1) He moved from Ur to Haran, where his father died. (2) He moved on toward the Promised Land (12: 5-9), and soon came to Shechem, where Jehovah appeared to him, and where he built an altar of worship. (3) He moved on to Bethel and there built an altar and received a renewal of the divine covenant. (4) A famine in Canaan led him to go to Egypt for food (12: 10-20). There he committed a great sin in pretending that Sarah was only his sister, and through this folly his wife was humiliated in being taken as a wife unto Pharaoh. (5) On leaving Egypt, Abraham again settled in Bethel, where God came again to him, and renewed His covenant (ch. 13). Abraham erected here an altar and worshiped God, and thereafter made his permanent abode at Hebron.

Abraham and Lot

Lot, his nephew, accompanied Abraham in all of his wandering until the return from Egypt to Bethel. He also had flocks and, on account of friction between their rude herdsmen, it became necessary for these two great shepherds to separate. Abraham, with rare generosity,

allowed Lot choice of the country and accepted what was left. Lot chose the plain of the valley of the Jordan and, in spite of the wickedness of Sodom, dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Abraham set up his abode in Hebron.

Twice after this Abraham rescued Lot from great danger. In the first case, Sodom and Gomorrah had been defeated and Lot and others led away captive by Chedorlaomer and his allies. Abraham, hearing of it, assembled an army and pursued them, and rescued Lot with his goods, and restored him to his home. At a later time, he rescued Lot from destruction in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. When God revealed to Abraham His purpose to destroy these cities, Abraham prayed for their deliverance. While he did not mention Lot in his petitions, God understood his desire and, for Abraham's sake, led Lot out of Sodom to a place of safety before it was destroyed.

Waiting for the Promised Son

God promised Abraham that his seed should be an innumerable host, and when he became discouraged because he was childless, the Lord told him that one should be born in his own house. But Abraham and Sarah waited until Sarah was long past the age to bear children. Their faith again weakened and, at the suggestion of Sarah, Abraham took Hagar, her Egyptian handmaid, in marriage, in the hope that through her the long-promised son might be born. This was a violation of the fundamental law of marriage and showed an unwillingness to wait upon the divine will. A son was born, but with him arose family troubles for Abraham. That son became the head of a hardy and hostile race, especially represented by the Arabians, which was always a hindrance to Israel and to the divine plans.

There was now another long period of waiting, but at length God came again and renewed His promise of the son, and confirmed the promise by changing the names of Abraham and Sarah and by giving to them the sign of circumcision. Then, after thirteen years from the birth of Ishmael, when Abraham was a hundred years old and according to nature no child could be born to them, God fulfilled His promise, and Sarah gave birth to the long-promised son. Out of their joy and in harmony with the divine

command, they named him Isaac (laughter). Of this son came Israel, and through Israel came Jesus to bless all the nations.

Character of Abraham

How great a man is Abraham! Even to-day he is revered and counted a spiritual father by Jews and Moham-medans and Christians alike. There is not in all history a nobler figure, and one marvels that such a time as that could have produced such a life. It was a strange type of greatness. He built no empire, created no art, performed no miracles, wrote no books. Indeed, he did not seem to make any special impression upon the people of his day. Three things about him are important: (1) He had high qualities. A study of his experiences will show that he had keen business insight, a good temper, rare wisdom, a warm family affection, true generosity, rare magnanimity and the finest type of hospitality. (2) He was truly religious. This is the chief element in his greatness. He had frequent communion with God and always manifested reverence, confidence, love and submission to His will. He made the service and worship of God first in all of his plans. (3) He had a forward look. He did not build his life for the present, but for the future, and linked his destiny with the far-off fulfillment of the promises of God. He expected the coming of the promised seed and by faith rejoiced in the day of Christ (John 8: 56). This is his supreme religious contribution. He lived for the future and hence lives on in the future.

ISAAC AND HIS EXPERIENCES

His Early Experiences

1. *His Childhood.* We do not know much of the childhood of Isaac. His miraculous birth made a profound impression. When he was eight days of age, he was circumcised. The occasion of weaning him was celebrated with a great feast. The conduct of Ishmael on this occasion led to the withdrawal of himself and Hagar, his mother, from the home of Abraham and the final establishment of Isaac as Abraham's only son.

2. *Offered in Sacrifice.* In the twenty-second chapter of Genesis we have the story of Abraham offering Isaac in

sacrifice to God. Abraham's faith was given its severest test by Jehovah's command that he go to Mount Moriah and offer Isaac as a burnt offering. That faith had triumphed over the love of kindred, and had waited twenty years for the promised son. Could it triumph over the love of offspring, especially when it seemed to destroy the prospect of all the other blessings which God had promised? His faith stood the test (Heb. 11: 17-19), Isaac was spared, and God renewed His covenant of mercy with him.

His Marriage to Rebekah

This story records the beginning of the leadership of Isaac and looks to the blessing of all nations through him. His mother was dead and the home was in sorrow. Abraham seeks a wife for his son, who enters with her into his mother's tent, and is comforted. In all of the story Abraham shows an intense desire to preserve the purity of the family and of his own worship and faith. Eliezer, his aged servant, was sent to Haran to secure a wife from among his kinspeople. Special divine guidance was sought in the whole matter, and the divine leadership was acknowledged at every point. Rebekah and her family were clearly influenced by religious considerations.

His Two Sons

The life of Isaac after his marriage is not discussed at length. We are told of the renewal to him of the Abrahamic covenant and of a serious blunder made by him at Gerar, by which his wife was endangered and he himself was compelled to leave Gerar. But all the recorded events of much importance have to do with his twin sons, Esau and Jacob.

1. *The Sons.* For twenty years Isaac and Rebekah remained childless. This was a source of great grief to them. Finally, in answer to the earnest prayer of Isaac, twin sons were born to them. These sons were very different in disposition and life, and their descendants for centuries showed a like difference and even became bitter enemies. Esau was a great hunter, a frank and generous man, but unappreciative of the best things. Jacob was ambitious and persevering, but preferred the quiet of the home-life. Esau was the favorite of his father, while Jacob was preferred by his mother.

2. *The Patriarchal Blessing.* Naturally Esau, being the older, would be entitled to the parental birthright, which involved the headship of the family and a double portion of the family possessions. In this case it also involved the heirship of all the promises of eternal and spiritual blessings that inhered in Isaac, the heir of Abraham. The recipient of the covenant-blessings would be expected to transmit them to his descendants.

3. *Jacob Receives the Blessing.* Several things worked together to give this great blessing to Jacob instead of to his older brother. In the first place, God, before their birth, had indicated his choice of Jacob. This should have settled the whole matter, but it did not settle it with Isaac and his family. Isaac wanted to give the birthright blessing to Esau, and Rebekah was constantly on the lookout lest he should do so. In the second place, Esau proved himself unworthy of it. He was a sensual man and when hungry sold his birthright to his brother for a good dinner. Surely the rich covenant involved should not be deposited in one whose spiritual aspirations were so low as this bargain would indicate. Then, too, he married two heathen women, greatly displeasing his parents, and showing that he could not be trusted to keep pure the religious stock. In the third place, Jacob deceived his father and secured the blessing. Regardless of the clear choice of God and because of partiality to Esau, Isaac determined to bestow this blessing on him. But Rebekah had determined that Jacob should have it. At her suggestion, Jacob made his father, who was practically blind, think he was Esau and thus secured the coveted blessing.

4. *A Dark Story.* All of this is a sad story. The relation of these sons darkened all the latter days of Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah disagreed concerning them. Esau and Jacob were not brotherly in their relations. Jacob took advantage of Esau and Esau tried to kill Jacob. Isaac tried to thwart the will of God in the matter of the birthright blessing and Rebekah could not trust God to carry out His purpose. Isaac would lead Esau to do wrong in seeking what was not his, and Rebekah would lead Jacob to do wrong in seeking what was his by divine decree.

Character of Isaac

The story of the life of Isaac is very brief and contains little of special interest. Those events of his life that are

important belong more to the life of Abraham and Jacob than to his own. He lived in a quiet home at or near Hebron, and manifested a quiet and peace-loving disposition. He was pious and reverent, and was possessed of an abiding faith in God. He is an example of the average man of any race or age who follows the line of least resistance. He loved his wife very dearly, and yet, through cowardly deception, exposed her to the most serious calamity. Nowhere in his whole life did he merit any special praise, yet as the son of promise, and for the sake of Abraham, he was given an honored place among the patriarchs and was blessed with repeated renewals of the Abrahamic covenant.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER V

JACOB AND JOSEPH

Scripture Account: Genesis 28—50

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CHAPTER V

JACOB AND JOSEPH

Scripture Account: Genesis 28—50

JACOB WHO BECAME ISRAEL

General Statement

1. *His Name.* It is important that we keep constantly in mind the character of the man with whom we are dealing. Late in his life as he returned to Canaan and after a night of wonderful experience in wrestling with God, his name was changed to Israel from which name his descendants are called Israelites. Before this, he was called Jacob. He received this name, which means heel-catcher or supplanter, from the incident of his having hold of the heel of Esau, his twin brother, when he was born.

2. *His Treachery.* Already we have noticed two occasions on which he showed himself true to his name. (1) In purchasing Esau's birthright. It was a mean trick for him to take advantage of his famishing brother and extort from him an oath by which he sold to him the advantages of the parental birthright. Certainly Esau proved himself unworthy of the covenant blessing and Jacob showed a high appreciation of it, but only bad could come from taking such advantage of his brother's weakness. (2) In stealing Esau's blessing. Knowing his father's plan to bless Esau and following his mother's scheme, Jacob took advantage of Isaac's blindness and by putting the skin of a kid upon his hands and neck and feigning his brother's voice, so impersonated his brother that his father gave him the coveted blessing. When Esau came and learned of this trickery, he wept bitterly. He declared that Jacob, true to his name, had twice supplanted him and he determined that he would kill him in revenge.

Flight from Home

The results of his sins began at once to manifest themselves. He and his mother were both guilty and both must suffer. The spirit of vengeance aroused in Esau made it necessary for Jacob to leave the father he deceived, the brother he defrauded and the fond mother who aided him in his sin. At one stroke he was deprived of all that he held dear, and his devoted mother was compelled to send away her favorite son never to see his face again. She induced Isaac to send him away to seek a wife from among his kin at Haran. It was a sad flight. Behind him were all the memories of childhood, all the baseness of his own evil deeds and the grim specter of Esau's vengeance; before him, God alone knew what. Little comfort did he find in the fact that he had received the covenant blessing. He was a conscious transgressor and his thoughts would most certainly rest on his unhappy circumstances.

Vision and Prayer at Bethel

1. *The Vision.* On the first day of his flight, Jacob reached Bethel which was about forty miles to the north. There, at the shrine of his grandfather, Abraham, and amid most hallowed memories, he lay down beneath the stars of heaven to sleep, having a stone for his pillow. His thoughts of the day no doubt influenced his dreams that night and he had a vision of great religious significance. A ladder reached from earth to heaven, angels ascended and descended upon it and God stood above it. He renewed with Jacob the covenant-promises made to Abraham and Isaac and assured him of His protecting presence and blessing.

2. *The Prayer.* Recognizing the presence of God in the place, Jacob worshiped Him and made suitable vows. The place became very sacred to him, and in order to keep it so, he set up a memorial there and called it Bethel, which means "house of God." In his prayer on this occasion, he asks for the presence of God, for divine keeping, for food and raiment and for a peaceful return to his father's house. He was now an exile from home, but, both in his father's blessing and in the divine promises here given him, he was to inherit the birthright and covenant blessing. He wanted to return to his father's

house, and sought to return in peace with his brother who now threatened to kill him.

Experiences at Haran

Jacob finally arrived at Padan-aram or Haran. This was the scene of the early services of his grandfather, Abraham, and the remembrance of his faith and obedience was calculated to inspire Jacob with a new spirit. Here he remained twenty years and had several experiences of importance.

1. *Winning His Wife.* The scene at the well when he arrived, in which he kissed Rachel, and the conduct of Laban when he learned of him, were such as often occur in Arabia to-day. Jacob's kisses and tears are characteristic of the emotion of Orientals. But love was stirring in the heart of Jacob and he gave himself in service (practically as a slave) for seven years to pay the bride-price which Laban set upon his beloved Rachel. So intense was his love for her that when Laban deceived him and gave him Leah, Jacob readily contracted to serve another seven years for her. This deception not only compelled him to serve another seven years, but gave him two wives instead of one.

2. *His Family.* During his twenty years' stay at Haran eleven of Jacob's children were born. The story as given in the Scripture, describes his home life as very unhappy. He had been forced into polygamy, and out of it grew favoritism and jealousy, such as would yield little happiness for him and his wives. None of the hideousness of it is covered up, the sacred writer seeming desirous of letting us feel something of the awful reaping which comes to him who sows evil. In spite of this the sons of Jacob became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, which were later united under a common head into the kingdom of Israel.

3. *Trading with Laban.* In their dealings with each other, Jacob and Laban were all the time trying to swindle or outwit each other. This contest of wits reflects the moral standards of the two men and makes one feel that they counted it a virtue to swindle another out of his property or labor. At first, Laban got the better of the contest, but soon the tide turned. Jacob decided to leave. This gave him the advantage of Laban, who knew that God had prospered the work of Jacob

and, therefore, wanted him to stay. He used this advantage, and after an agreement and by the use of a simple device, known to eastern cattle breeders, soon won all the strongest of the offspring of Laban's cattle. He served faithfully for his wives, but now, being free, showed his old nature by supplanting Laban.

Return to Canaan

1. *Flight from Laban.* When Laban became angry about the increase of cattle, God appeared to Jacob and instructed him to return to Canaan. He then secured the consent of his wives to go with him and secretly withdrew, taking with him his family and all he had. Laban followed him, bent on vengeance, but was warned of God not to harm him. On overtaking him, he did chide Jacob, who in return told him how he had wronged him and how God had prospered Laban on his account. They finally made a covenant of peace and each went his way.

2. *Meeting Esau.* Now that he was on his way to Canaan, Jacob began to prepare to meet Esau. He remembered his guilt and feared the vengeance of his brother. Before crossing the Jordan, he sent messengers to Esau to inform him of his coming and learned from them that Esau, with four hundred armed men, was coming to meet him. Jacob was alarmed and arranged his possessions in two groups in the hope of saving at least a part of them. He also sent to Esau valuable presents and finally, sent his family across the brook Jabbok; but Jacob needed spiritual preparation, and he received it while there alone with God. God wrestled with him and permanently impaired his physical strength by putting his thigh out of joint, but Jacob had gained new spiritual strength. He was no longer Jacob, the supplanter, but Israel, a prince of God. From this time forward he was a new man. He was now ready to meet his brother and confess, and try to remedy his wrong. The meeting with Esau showed that all of Jacob's fears were needless. Both men manifested a generous and brotherly spirit, and after the exchange of suitable compliments, they separated. Jacob was now back in his native land and soon settled at Shechem.

3. *Experiences in Canaan.* After settling at Shechem, Jacob had varied and important experiences. His sons, Simeon and Levi, slew some Shechemites, and for the

sake of safety, he had to move. He was directed of God to go to Bethel and there the covenant blessing was renewed to him. Leaving Bethel, he went south to Bethlehem, where Rachel died, after giving birth to Benjamin. His sons seem to have become wild and reckless, and the oldest committed an outrage in the family. Jacob went to Hebron, the scene of his childhood, and was back at his father's house in peace, but was soon called upon to bury his father.

JOSEPH, THE PRESERVER OF HIS PEOPLE

General Statement

These stories exhibit Joseph as cheerful and uncomplaining and as possessed of an ambition which no adversity could destroy. With remarkable literary power and unity and with rare charm of style, they so portray the highest ideals of integrity and truth that their value is inestimable. In it all there is a depth and pathos that is not surpassed in all literature. Pent-up emotion tugs at one's heart all the time as one reads of the anxiety of the brothers, the fear of their father and the burning affection of Joseph. The stories are marked by many striking contrasts. We see Joseph as a petted and spoiled child, as slave, as overseer, as prisoner and as governor of the greatest among the nations. In all these positions he was faithful. He performed no miracles and made no conquests of power, but by faithfulness, business sagacity and loyal service to others, he secured promotion and became the hero of service.

Joseph's Youth in Canaan

Three things concerning the youth of Joseph stand out. (1) Jacob's partiality toward him. He clothed Joseph in a long-sleeved, many-colored tunic, commonly worn by princes, and he may have thus indicated his purpose to bestow upon him the family birthright. But in spite of all this Joseph was entirely trustworthy. (2) His ambitious dreams about himself. In his early dreams we discover the stirring of very high ambitions. One dream saw the work of his brethren subordinated to his; the other was interpreted by his father to reveal his expectation of supremacy in the family. He seemed to

look forward to the position indicated by the birthright, and later he certainly attained to that position. (3) His brethren's hatred for him. His father's partiality together with his dreams so stirred the hatred of his brethren that they were looking for a way to dispose of him. The opportunity finally came. They sold him into Egypt, dipped his tunic into the blood of a kid and deceived their father, making him believe that an evil beast had slain him. Here the curtain falls on a scene of family crime and sorrow.

A Slave and Prisoner in Egypt

The Ishmaelites, who purchased Joseph, sold him for a slave to Potiphar, a captain of Pharaoh's guard. As a slave, God was with Joseph and prospered him. He was so faithful in all of his duties, worked with such success for the interest of his master, that he soon won the complete confidence of the Egyptian and was made overseer of everything belonging to his household. In this position of overseer, he was no less successful and no less faithful. Because of him, God prospered all the affairs of his master. But Potiphar's wife loved Joseph and daily tempted him to commit sin with her; this sin their moral standards did not severely condemn. His refusal to yield to her wicked blandishments is one of the high moral achievements of all time, but it aroused her hatred and, through false accusations, she had him thrown into prison. He was an agreeable and helpful prisoner, and so won the confidence of the prison-keeper that he was given charge over all the other prisoners. He was there something over two years, during which time he interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners.

Second Ruler of Egypt

1. *Exaltation and Family.* Here Joseph is to be seen in a place of power. From prisoner to governor! What a change! Note the new connection with his dreams. Because of them, he was hated and sold into Egypt. Now a dream of the butler and baker, which he interpreted, led to his being called to interpret the dream of the king. His great wisdom in this so impressed Pharaoh that he believed God was with him and had specially fitted him to govern during the seven years of plenty and seven

years of famine which he said the king's dream foretokened. In connection with his exaltation, he was given his wife, and while in the position of power, there were born to him his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

2. *Faithfulness to Pharaoh and Preparation for Famine.* The faithfulness of Joseph to Pharaoh is not surpassed in all history. He usurped no authority and sought no honor for himself, but turned all honor and profit to the king, even buying all the land for him. The preparation for the famine was so ample that there was abundance for all who came during the whole famine. All nations had to go to Egypt for food, and along with the rest Jacob turned to him for assistance. This brings us again into touch with the patriarch and his family.

3. *Dealing with His Brethren.* There is a thrilling interest in the story of Joseph's dealing with his brethren. There is first deep pathos, and then seeming harshness. His brethren go to Egypt, are imprisoned as spies, and Simeon is held as hostage until Benjamin is brought. On the second trip, Joseph feasted them, put his cup in Benjamin's sack, and arrested them for stealing it. Judah offered to become the slave of Joseph, if he would release Benjamin, so that his father might be spared the grief and loss. Convinced by this spirit of self-sacrifice and love for their father, that his brothers were changed men, Joseph, with much emotion and with all possible consolation, made himself known to them. Here are the finest tests of character. They confess their wrongs and he forgives them.

4. *Jacob's Sojourn and Death in Egypt.* During these years of sorrow and suffering, Jacob had held close to the promise of God and had ripened into a beautiful old age. At length the clouds broke and his sons were given back. Joseph received his father with his household into Egypt, introduced him to Pharaoh and cared for him the rest of his days. Jacob's sun set in peace in Egypt. He called his sons about him and gave them a parting blessing. He also blessed the sons of Joseph and gave them an equal place with his own sons. He then died and his bones were laid to rest with those of his father in the ancestral tomb at Hebron. The story ends with the covenant people in Egypt and, although Joseph died there, he declared his faith in a coming deliverance and return to Canaan, and gave a dying charge

concerning the removal of his bones when they should depart. This request was carried out, when under Moses they went out of Egypt.

Joseph's Character and Accomplishments

Of all men, Joseph was in many respects most remarkable. Viewed from all angles, the beauty and perfection of his character are unsurpassed by any other of whom we have record.

1. *Tests of His Character.* He was tested from more standpoints than any other man. His father spoiled him with favoritism. His brothers envied and hated and grossly injured him. He was tempted to lust and disregard for the rights of others by the appeals of a base but highly respected woman. He had to endure the wrong of years of imprisonment, during which virtue suffered at the hands of vice. He was subjected to all the perils of high honor and power. He had the opportunity to avenge himself of the wrongs he had suffered and especially to punish his brethren. All these were crucial experiences that put his character to the test, but he came forth out of them all a conqueror.

2. *Fine Qualities of His Character.* He is the finest example we have of faithfulness to others in all relations. Whether slave or overseer, prisoner or governor, he was absolutely dependable. He is the finest example of the true spirit of forgiveness. The generosity and even magnanimity with which he not only forgave his brethren, but showed them the hand of God in it all, surpasses all ordinary bounds. They set Joseph out as altogether unique. More surprising than all, is the constancy of his faith and his recognition at all times of the unfailing presence of God. He was more uniformly triumphant in his faith than was Abraham, the father of the faithful.

These Stories Typical

The lives of all the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in some things remind us of New Testament truth; but Joseph is perhaps more highly figurative of Jesus than any of the others. His being hated and cast out by his brethren is like the rejection of Jesus; the way his wicked brethren came to him in their extremity and received forgiveness and sustenance suggests how sinners

find mercy and life in Jesus; his prosperity and honor in Egypt and the final coming of his brethren to him suggests that after Jesus has gained great power among the Gentiles the Jews will accept Him as their Saviour and Messiah; the humiliation, suffering and exaltation of Joseph suggest like experiences of Jesus.

Book of Genesis

It is difficult to estimate the value of the book of Genesis. It alone gives us knowledge of the events that transpired prior to the life of Moses. Without it, the Bible would be an incomplete book; we would know nothing of the origin of the world and man, the origin of sin, the flood, the lives of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, the origin of the Hebrew race and the beginning of God's revelation to man. Genesis is probably the most valuable book in the Bible. Without it we could not understand much that is in the other sacred books. The facts of Genesis are referred to in such a way throughout the whole Bible that we must know it to understand the rest. It covers more than half of the time of all Old Testament history.

Book of Job

The incidents recorded in the book of Job seem to belong to this period or to an earlier time. There is in the book no mention of the bondage or of early Hebrew patriarchs as there would likely have been, if it had been written later. The Sabeans and Chaldeans were Job's neighbors, and he lived in the east where the first settlements of mankind were made. The social and religious conditions and the family life, portrayed in the book, correspond to those of this period. There was art and invention; there was understanding of astronomy and mining; there was a fine family affection and evidences of social kindness and benevolence; there was high development in commerce and government; there was both true and false or idolatrous religion.

PERIOD THREE

THE HEBREW TRIBES

Time—From the descent into Egypt to the beginning of the kingdom

CHAPTER VI. The Struggle for Liberty.

CHAPTER VII. Learning the Principles of National Life.

CHAPTER VIII. The Struggle for a Home.

CHAPTER IX. The Struggle for National Unity.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

Scripture Account: Exodus 1—14

Introductory

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CHAPTER VI

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY

Scripture Account: Exodus 1—14

INTRODUCTORY

The Period Characterized

The last period closed with the Hebrews in Egypt. Jacob and Joseph had died and the families of their sons remained there. Moreover, the blessing of Jacob upon them had paved the way for the sons to develop into tribes. This they did very rapidly, and by the time of the Exodus from Egypt, there were twelve large and separate tribes. For a long period, continuing to the time of the coronation of Saul, each tribe had its own government, but they often co-operated in military movements. This was especially so during the period of wilderness wanderings.

During this period of the tribes, the Hebrews had peculiar and unusual relation to the Lord who was their only King (Judg. 8: 23). There was, however, after the giving of the Law a regular order of priests who performed for them certain religious services (Ex. 28: 1), and from time to time men called judges were raised up by divine appointment to lead and rule them (Judg. 2: 16). The government was wholly by the Lord and the time has been frequently called a period of Theocratic Administration.

Egyptian Life and Religion

From the Bible and from inscriptions we know much of the life of the Egyptians. They shaved the beard (Gen. 41: 14); prophesied with the cup (Gen. 44: 5); embalmed the dead (Gen. 50: 2, 3, 26); manufactured papyrus baskets (Ex. 2: 3). Their homes were surrounded by large flower gardens and their sitting rooms were carpeted and adorned with most elegant furniture. There

was abundant music and they were given to festivities and to seeking pleasure and ease. The priests and soldiers were privileged classes, while the artisans and husbandmen were counted as inferior. There was a great slave population. They worshiped many gods of many kinds. Osiris, traditionally the first king, and Isis his wife, were the only gods worshiped by all the Egyptians. They worshiped many animals, the most remarkable of which was Opis, the sacred bull of Memphis, under whose form Osiris was worshiped. The bull was kept in a magnificent temple, attended by priests and worshiped by all the people.

ISRAEL IN BONDAGE

The Oppression

1. *Serf-Classes.* Two things led to an increasing serf-class in Egypt. First, their foreign conquests brought back many foreigners who were thrust into that class. Second, the policy of the later kings called for many slaves. It was not long until this class far outnumbered the free Egyptians and became a source of constant fear. Such is the fear which the Bible narrative suggests, and we may be sure that the Hebrews as we find them in the Bible story were included in this great class.

2. *The Oppressor.* It is common to identify Rameses II, who reigned sixty-seven years and was the greatest king of the nineteenth dynasty, as the Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph" and oppressed Israel. He made great religious and political changes and gave himself to building enterprises and to commercial expansion. He was vain, energetic, pleasure-loving, tyrannical and given to much effort at display. He filled all Egypt with great statues of himself and with memorials of his building enterprises.

3. *The Oppression.* When the Hebrews became numerous, and probably because they had been friendly to the shepherd kings who had but recently been expelled, the king feared lest they should assist some of the invaders which constantly harassed Egypt on the north. To cripple the Hebrews, he gave them exhausting tasks

of making brick and put them under cruel taskmasters. When they continued to increase in number, in spite of all this suffering and cruelty, Pharaoh, first privately and then publicly, tried to destroy all their male children. This order, while probably in force but a short time, was a severe blow to the Hebrews, whose love for children, and especially for male children, has always been proverbial.

Effect on Israel of Their Stay in Egypt

1. *Prepared them for National Life.* Israel, on entering Egypt, consisted of twelve nomadic families of seventy souls and some slaves, and in Canaan would have broken up into a dozen small and wandering tribes. But they went into Egypt and suffered, and were thereby bound together in a common bond and the way was prepared for the work of Moses and for the real birth of the nation.

2. *Advanced their Civilization.* In Canaan they had wandered from place to place, but in Egypt they were thrust into a settled home in an agricultural country, and in the midst of a great material and intellectual civilization. They no doubt learned much from the Egyptians concerning military tactics and equipment and the art of agriculture. They could not have failed to gain great profit from the social, political and commercial systems of that enlightened people.

3. *Gave them a Language.* There is no way to account for their language except on a basis of Egyptian influence upon them. Up to this time all Semitic language was cuneiform, but after their departure from Egypt, the Hebrews have an alphabetical language written from right to left. This language was derived from the Egyptians and its very existence corroborates the Scripture teaching of their long stay in Egypt and shows how vast was Egypt's influence upon them.

4. *Developed and Confirmed their Religion.* Their going out of Egypt, through a religious contest, would especially impress them with the glory and power of their God. Their suffering and deliverance led them to believe that their God was in sympathy with the afflicted and dependent and made them ready to champion their cause against the oppressors. They learned to hate every form of political and industrial tyranny, and their

religion came to have in it a strong social element which expressed itself in kindness to slaves, resident foreigners, hired laborers and widows and orphans, and demanded justice and mercy and love as prerequisites to the divine favor.

Life of Moses the Deliverer

Moses was a patriot, poet, liberator, lawgiver and historian. All the centuries are indebted to him. He is one of the greatest men of all history—far greater today than when he humiliated Pharaoh more than three millenniums ago. His life falls into three parts of forty years each.

1. *At the Court of Egypt.* He was born of religious parents who saw in him the promise of worthy service to God, and, when they could no longer hide him from those who were commanded to slay the Hebrew children, they put him in the river Nile in a basket of reeds and trusted him to the providence of God. This act of faith was rewarded by his being brought into the house of Pharaoh. His Hebrew mother became his nurse, so that he had her care and religious training, and at the same time he was trained in all the wisdom and culture of the Egyptians (Acts. 7: 22). Thus was he given the highest intellectual culture and the sublimest faith.

2. *In the Desert of Midian.* At the age of forty, Moses faced a crisis. Would he yield to luxury and worldly glory and a false view of life, or renounce the royalty of Egypt and cast his lot with his enslaved people and trust their God? He made the choice of faith and struck for the freedom of the Israelites (Heb. 11: 24-26; Acts 7: 20-29). Finding them unprepared to follow his leadership, he fled into the desert of Midian. Here he gained an intimate knowledge of the great wilderness through which for forty years he was to lead Israel. Here, also, God appeared to him and gave him instructions concerning the task of delivering them out of bondage.

3. *As Leader and Lawgiver of Israel.* In obedience to the divine instructions, he went back to Egypt, organized his people, compelled Pharaoh to let them depart, and for forty years led them in their wilderness wanderings. He took a slave race and fashioned it into a nation of the purest spiritual and moral ideals the world had ever known.

Moses' Call and Task

1. *The Call.* The call of Moses had in it both a human and a divine element. Like all great leaders and benefactors of the race, the cry of the needy and the oppressed was a call to him to enlist in their service. This element of a call, without which there is no worthy work for men, was furnished by his knowledge of the needs of the Hebrews. But God also heard their cry, and according to His covenant with Abraham, definitely called Moses to deliver them from the tyranny of Pharaoh.

2. *The Task.* The task assigned to Moses was three-fold. First, political. He was to overcome the power of the mighty king of Egypt and was to deliver from his oppression and territory 600,000 men, together with their children and possessions, and was to give these emancipated slaves laws and so unite them into a nation that they would survive both the attacks of hostile nations and the evils of civil strife. Second, social. He was to provide rules to govern their social relations so that the individual and the family might be clean and all their relations to each other be just and helpful. Third, religious. He was to show Egypt the weakness and failure of her idolatrous worship, and to establish in the wilderness the true worship of the one real God who is ruler over all. Such a political, social, and religious task led to his enactment of a wonderful code of civil, sanitary, moral, ceremonial and religious law.

3. *Encouragements to the Task.* Moses at first hesitated, and one wonders what finally encouraged him to undertake the enterprise. First of all, it was a fitting time. The great king of Egypt had died and eighty years of weak rule had undermined the power of the government. In the second place, God laid it upon him as a duty and gave him two miracles with which to win the people. This sense of personal obligation and the promise of the presence and assistance of God, together with his knowledge of the need of the people, encouraged him to undertake the task.

ISRAEL WINS HER LIBERTY**Contest with Pharaoh**

1. *Preparation.* This most remarkable contest was preceded by suitable preparation. Moses informed the

Hebrews concerning the purposes of God, and induced them to enter heartily into the divine plan. He organized them for the expedition and requested Pharaoh to let them go and worship. Pharaoh replied by putting added burdens upon the Hebrews. This led to a contest between Moses and the magicians of Egypt, in which Moses showed that he represented a greater power than that of Pharaoh.

2. *Ten Miracles.* The real contest with Pharaoh consisted in ten national calamities that befell Egypt. They were: water turned into blood, frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the death of the first-born. They fell upon the Egyptians in rapid succession, but the Israelites were exempt from at least eight of them. Through them, Pharaoh and his people were overcome and humiliated, and Israel was given her freedom.

3. *Religious Purpose.* God wished for Israel to go into the wilderness and worship (Ex. 5: 3), and proposed to show His power (Ex. 7: 17) and to execute judgment against the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12: 12). Each plague was calculated to frustrate Egyptian worship or to humiliate some Egyptian god. As an illustration, the plague of lice stopped all worship of Egyptians. Their priests could not serve because they could not free themselves from the lice, and they were not allowed to conduct worship if any insect had touched them since they had gone through the process of cleansing. The plague of murrain showed that the sacred bull of Memphis, which was expected to save the cattle, and which was worshiped by all the people, could not protect their cattle. Thus Jehovah showed His superiority over all the gods of Egypt, and impressed His power, not only upon Israel, but on all the world.

4. *Some Problems.* In the study of this story some devout minds have met certain serious problems. (1) Were the plagues miracles? While some of them, at least, could have happened in nature, they are proven to be miraculous by their intensity, by their rapid succession, by their coming and going at the command of Moses, by the exemption of Israel from all or most of them, and by the fact that the writer of Exodus, the Egyptians and the Hebrews, all thought them to be manifestations of divine power. (2) What is meant by the statement, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart?" We may never solve

all of its mystery. But it is interesting to note that Pharaoh's hardening is spoken of twenty times in this story, and ten times it is ascribed to Pharaoh himself, and ten times to God. Not till the sixth plague do we read that God hardened his heart, and in the seventh it is again attributed to Pharaoh. God gave ample opportunity for him to repent, but when he failed and God had begun judgment, He would not allow any weakening of Pharaoh to interfere until He had humiliated every Egyptian god. By hardening his own heart, Pharaoh had defied God and sealed his doom, and then God "made his heart strong" in order to show how He will finally destroy the wicked. (3) Why was it that the Israelites "borrowed from the Egyptians" when they left Egypt? The word "borrow" should be translated "ask." This removes the whole trouble. They had been the people's slaves, and on setting out into the desert "asked" and received generous gifts. Such generosity may indicate that the people were sorry for the way they had oppressed Israel. It was certainly a good providence that would greatly aid them during their wilderness experience.

Passover Feast

Before the death of the first-born, God instituted the Passover to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt and especially the deliverance of the Hebrew homes from the power of the death angel. The blood of a paschal lamb was sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintels of their dwellings and the first-born in those homes were spared. Having thus celebrated beforehand their victory, the tenth plague fell and there was death in every Egyptian home. When that stroke fell, Israel's fetters fell; the struggle for liberty was rewarded and Israel was hurriedly driven forth to freedom. The Passover was ever afterward celebrated annually in remembrance of this great deliverance (Ex. 12: 18—21: 42). The Passover lamb is a beautiful figure of Christ.

Crossing the Red Sea

Now that they were sent forth from Egypt, God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. These symbols of divine presence and leadership continued with them through the entire wilderness

wanderings. At the end of three days they reached the Red Sea. There Israel learned that Pharaoh had hardened his heart and was pursuing them. They were greatly frightened, but Moses quieted the people and God caused the cloud that had led them to remove to their rear and throw a shadow upon their enemies while furnishing them with light. He also gave the east wind a miraculous power (Ex. 14: 21) that caused the waters of the sea to separate so that they could go across. Pharaoh and his hosts attempted to follow them, but God caused the waters to return and overwhelm and destroy them all. In this, as in other miracles, Moses was God's instrument.

Significance of the Deliverance

1. *The Number Set Free.* The sacred writers put the number of those going out at about 600,000 men besides children (Ex. 12: 37; Num. 26: 51). It may, however, be explained that men need not be construed as warriors, but merely grown people, since only children and not women and children are to be added. This makes significant the movement. Tremendous issues were involved. To release all this company of slaves could not be accomplished without making a very great impress upon the people themselves, and upon the world at large. Then, too, what would become of them?

2. *The Results.* It established the confidence of the people in the leadership of Moses, and in the goodness and power of Jehovah, their God. It made them ready to accept His leadership and protection and to enter into a solemn covenant to be loyal to Him. Henceforth, they made it the basis of appeal for proper treatment of all needy and dependent, that God had redeemed them out of Egyptian slavery. Their prophets made it the high reason why they should be true to Jehovah. But it had its influence with others also. Later on, we shall find that other people trembled before them, because they had heard of their deliverance. Still more, it meant that in one day the world had thrust into it a new and complete nation that would finally displace some other peoples and change the whole political situation. It required future history to disclose the vast meaning of that deliverance.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VII

LEARNING THE PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL LIFE

Scripture Account: Exodus 15—Deuteronomy 34

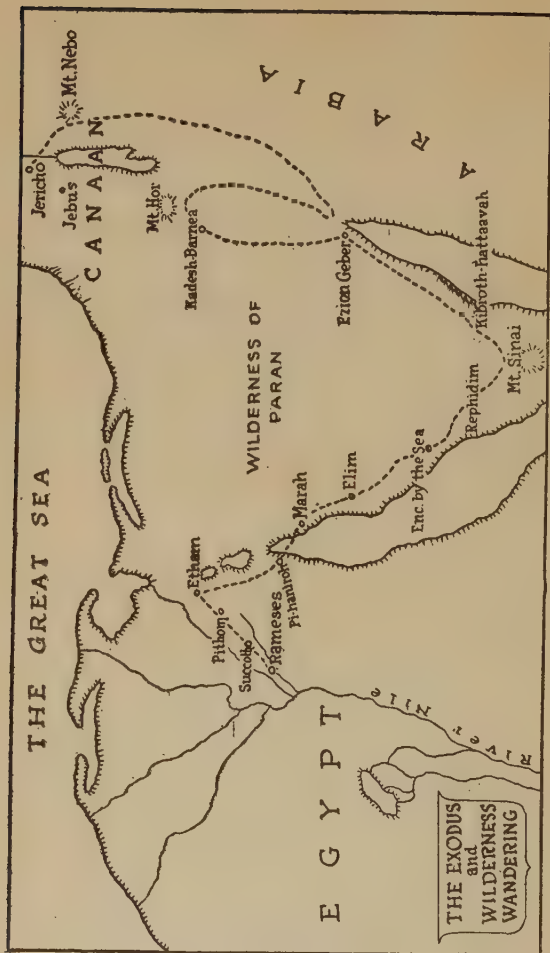
ON THE WAY TO SINAI

Song of Deliverance

When they were safe over the Red Sea and saw the overthrow of their enemies, their feelings of joy expressed themselves in a great song of victory in which they praised God and recounted the incidents of His work of deliverance. Their peril had been so great, and their deliverance so complete and so evidently of Jehovah, that there was no place for pride, but there was place for this great ode which shall ever abide as a monument of the deliverance.

The Journey and Its Three Lessons

They could not tarry at the place of triumph, but must journey to Sinai, where they were to be organized into a nation. This journey gave them their first lessons in the fundamental principles of their national life. The lessons are revealed in their experiences. (1) They are to follow the leadership of God. They must follow the lead of the cloud that was to guide them through the entire wilderness wandering. If it moved they must move, and they must camp where it stopped, whether it was where the water was bitter (or poisonous), as at Marah, where there were good springs, as at Elim, or where there was not any water, as at Rephidim. (2) They are to trust God for support. In two or three ways and on two or three occasions, this is made clear. At Marah, God, by a miracle, turned poisonous waters into sweet; in the wilderness of Zin, He gave them quail to eat and also began to give them daily manna from heaven; at Rephidim, He gave them water from the rock smitten by Moses. In all this, He demonstrates His purpose to



care for their needs and taught them to trust Him. (3) They are to be victorious over enemies. At Rephidim, they encountered, and overcame the Amalekites, a tribe of Edomites, and learned that, while they could not escape combat, God would give them victory. By this time they had become acquainted with the two miracles of mercy that were with them through the whole wilderness journey; the pillar of cloud and the daily manna.

A YEAR'S EXPERIENCE AT SINAI

The Solemn Covenant at Sinai

1. *The Mountain.* There have been many different opinions concerning the location of this sacred mountain which is sometimes called Horeb (Ex. 3: 1; 17: 6, etc.). All the Old Testament references to it clearly indicate that it was in the vicinity of Edom and connect it with Mount Seir (Deut. 33: 2; Judg. 5: 1-5). Several points have been put forward as the probable site, but none of them can be claimed with certainty. But in spite of our failure to locate the exact mountain peak, we are certain that at its base took place, not only the most important event in the history of the Hebrew people, but one of the most important in the whole history of men.

2. *The Covenant.* The God who had called Abraham and led the patriarchs, who had seen their suffering in Egypt and had liberated them, who had guided and supported and protected them on their journey, now in the midst of grandly impressive manifestations brought Israel into solemn covenant relations with Himself. It was a blood covenant, the most sacred and inviolable known to ancient peoples. Half of the blood was sprinkled upon the altar and half upon the people, thus signifying that all had consented to the terms of the covenant. In this covenant, Israel is obligated to loyalty, service, and worship, while Jehovah is to continue to protect and deliver them.

Moses Receives the Law

1. *Its Reception.* In the first instance, God spoke the law orally and the people covenanted to keep it. Moses then went up into the mountain where God gave him the Ten Commandments on tables of stone; but during his

forty days' stay up there, Israel made a golden calf and worshiped it. This so angered Moses when he returned that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. At the command of God he hewed out new stones and again went into the mountain where God rewrote the covenant on the tables, and he returned with them to the people with his face so aglow with the divine glory that he had to veil it.

2. *Its Purpose.* There seem to have been two purposes in promulgating this law. (1) To preserve Israel as a separate and peculiar people. To weld the scattered fugitives from Egypt into a strong nation, distinct from other nations, required laws that would make them different in customs, religion and government. (2) A second purpose was to provide additional spiritual light, that they might know the way of salvation more perfectly. Its sacrifices foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ as their Redeemer from sin.

Divisions of the Law

1. *Law of Duty.* This is also called the moral law. It consists of Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) and relates to individual obligations. The first four define our duties to God and the last six explain our relation to other members of society. These "Ten Words" define religion in terms of life and deeds as well as worship. They point to the unchangeable distinctions between right and wrong and, in the last command, they reach the very highest standard by tracing crime back to our thought motive.

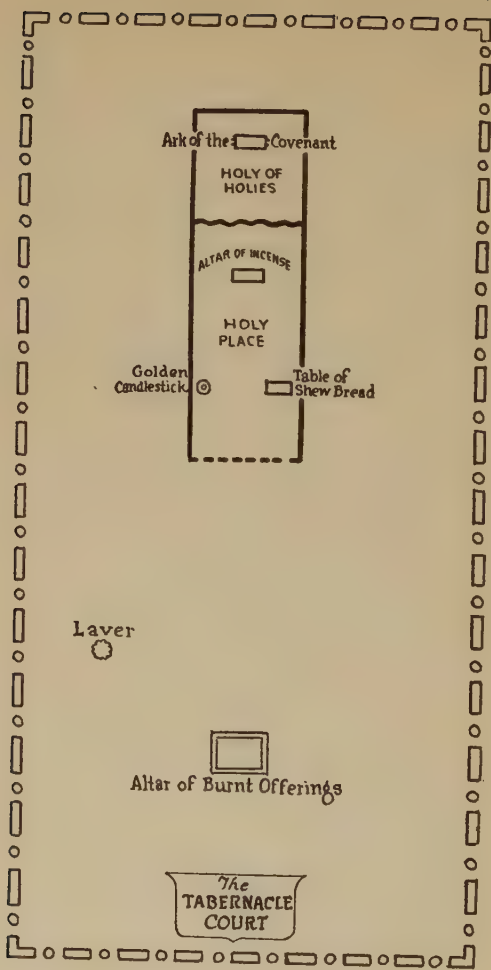
2. *Law of Mercy.* This is also called "The Law of Holiness" or "The Ceremonial Law." It is found in the instructions concerning the priesthood and sacrifices and was intended to show Israel man's sinfulness and how a sinful people can approach a holy God and themselves become holy. It, therefore, deals with such matters as personal chastity, unlawful marriages and general social purity, and with the religious behavior by which they were to be absolved from all impurity and symbolically made pure. They saw in it the need and blessing of blood atonement.

3. *Law of Justice.* This law is composed of miscellaneous, civil, humane and sanitary laws, calculated to insure right treatment of one another and thus promote

the highest happiness of all. There were laws of kindness to the helpless, laws protecting the rights of property, laws of sanitation and health, laws guarding the sanctity of the home and personal virtue, laws to protect human life. These laws reached their noblest expression in the law of neighbor, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19: 18), which is the final word concerning right relation to others. They were so amplified as to meet every domestic, social, civil, industrial and religious need in the life of the nation.

Special Factors and Agencies of the Law

In order to make permanent and useful all these laws four special factors or agencies were established. (1) A National Priesthood, through which they carried forward their worship. The priests were their most sacred officers and, as representatives of the people before God, they found His will for them. (2) National Feasts and sacred occasions. Besides the Passover, already discussed, the following are important: the weekly Sabbath, which set apart for God and their rest the seventh day of the week; the New Moon or Lunar Sabbath, observed with suitable sacrifices and services on the first day of each month; the Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover and commemorating the giving of the law; the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorating their experiences during the wilderness wandering, held at the close of the ingathering of crops, became also a thanksgiving occasion; Day of Atonement, the annual occasion when the priest made atonement for the sins of the people and designed to show the sinner's reconciliation with God; the Feast of Trumpets, observed on the first day of the civil year; the Sabbatical year, requiring that every seventh year the land rest and that all debts except those against foreigners be forgiven; the Year of Jubilee, setting aside every fiftieth year for the rest of the land and the performance of many gracious acts. (3) A National Sanctuary. This consisted of the Tabernacle, with its offerings and altars, and the Ark of the Covenant and the symbol of God's presence. (4) National Offerings. There are five great national offerings intended to furnish them a way of approach to God. (a) Sweet-savour offerings. These are the burnt offering, meal offering and the peace offering. (b) Nonsweet-



savour offerings. These are the sin offering and trespass offering, representing perfect offerings overlaid with human guilt. Together these offerings illustrated the work of Christ in Man's redemption.

JOURNEY TO KADESH-BARNEA

The Journey

After a little more than a year at Sinai, during which time Israel was gradually organized into a nation, their guiding cloud set forward and led them to Kadesh-barnea. This journey is made notable by the following important events: (1) At Paran, Moses made an urgent appeal to Hobab, his brother-in-law, to join the host of Israel, but he refused. (2) At Taberah, the fire of Jehovah burned throughout the camp, because of their murmurings. (3) To relieve Moses of the weight of the burden, seventy elders were appointed, who were thought to possess the wisdom of the Spirit. (4) The sending of the quail and the death of the people by plague. (5) Miriam, the sister of Moses, was smitten with leprosy, because, with Aaron, she rebelled against Moses and spoke disrespectfully of him.

Twelve Spies and Israel's Breakdown of Faith

From Kadesh, Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan. All returned praising the land and bearing evidences of its great fruitfulness, but ten of them did not believe that Israel could conquer it. The people believed the ten, and not only refused to try to enter Canaan, but proposed to select a new leader in Moses' stead and to return to Egypt. This was a national crisis, and an utter breakdown of faith. Never before had they turned their backs on the land of promise and their faces back toward the house of bondage. This was a climax of unbelief (Heb. 3: 19), a rebellion for which God sentenced them to forty years of wandering in the desert. All of the people above twenty years of age, except Caleb and Joshua, the two faithful spies, were forbidden to enter the promised land and were doomed to die in the wilderness.

FROM KADESH TO THE DEATH OF MOSES

Pathos of the Forty Years

Here is a story of deep pathos. The suffering of Israel during the forty years arouses our pity. Unhappiness and death are their daily portion. The case of Moses was worse still. He had led them safely to the border of the land of promise, but because of their sin was compelled to turn back and spend forty years in this uninteresting desert. Here he buried Miriam, his sister, and Aaron, his brother and helper; here he was criticized and finally led to commit a sin that prevented his entering Canaan. He appointed his successor, saw the strong men of Israel die and was himself buried. What a pathos in it all!

From Kadesh to Kadesh—Wilderness Wanderings

We cannot trace all of their journeys. They moved from place to place, not of course marching continuously each day, but changing their location as often, at least, as the requirements of pasturage demanded. They seem to have remained a long time at Kadesh (Deut. 1: 46) and may have made it a sort of headquarters. On this journey, there occurred the rebellion and punishment of Korah, and the budding of Aaron's rod, which attested the appointment of Aaron's family as priests. After thirty-eight years, they are again at Kadesh (Deut. 2: 14; Num. 20: 1), where the false spies led them to sin. While here this time, Miriam, Moses' sister, died; Moses sinned in connection with giving them water from the rock, and Jehovah decreed that he should not enter Canaan; and Moses was denied his request to pass peaceably through the land of Edom.

From Kadesh to the Jordan

This is the final stage of their wilderness journey. They have learned much of the genius and purpose of their national life; but these last days were crowded with excitement and worthy achievement. They made a long journey around the country of Edom, their kinsman, during which Aaron died on Mount Hor; the king of South Canaan was defeated and his country laid waste; fiery serpents were sent among them and the brazen serpent was provided as a remedy for them. Journeying on, they

passed the land of Moab and finally met and defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites. This victory over the Amorites brought them into conflict with Og, the great giant king of Bashan. Having defeated him, they soon passed on to Moab. Israel ranked these victories over Sihon and Og along with the overthrow of Pharaoh and the deliverance from Egypt (Psalms 135 and 136).

Prophecies of Balaam

Balak, the king of Moab, was greatly alarmed because these conquerors of Sihon and Og had settled just north of him. He sent to Balaam, a famous soothsayer or wise prophet of Chaldea, and sought at all cost to have him curse Israel, but instead he revealed how wonderfully Israel was blessed of God and how a scepter would arise out of Israel and smite and destroy Moab. This strange man, Balaam, seems to have had the gift of prophecy without its grace. He had knowledge of future events, but sought to use it to his own advantage. He was a money-loving prophet and tried repeatedly to speak a good word for Moab so that he might secure the reward offered by Balak. But Jehovah seems to have compelled him to speak to Israel's advantage. His language fitly describes the material splendor, the glorious victories, and the high spirit of Israel during the reign of David and Solomon. In a beautiful way he also pointed to the Messiah who should put all enemies under His feet.

GENERAL MATTERS

Last Scene on Moab

1. *The Scene.* Events are now transpiring in rapid succession and the story hastens to the close of the career of Moses, the great leader, prophet, priest and judge of Israel. The people have been numbered preparatory to their going over into Canaan; Joshua has been appointed successor to Moses; two and a half tribes have been settled on the east side of the Jordan; the cities of refuge have been appointed, and now Moses is delivering his farewell message. He recounts their journeys in the wilderness and the goodness of God upon them. He reminds them of all of God's law and gives such new

instructions and interpretations as they will need in their new condition in the promised land. He paints in frightful colors the terrible doom that will come to them, if they are disobedient, and eloquently describes the blessing of loyalty to God. After being called of God into the mountain to die, he pronounces, in one of the most beautiful passages in all the Scripture, his farewell blessing upon each of the tribes.

2. *Solemnity of the Occasion.* How solemn must have been that occasion! With what veneration they must have gazed upon him! He it was whom Jochebed with loving hands had laid in the bulrushes when one hundred and twenty years before Pharaoh had persecuted Israel. He was the man that had so nobly chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the attractions and honors of Egypt. His eyes under the shadow of Horeb had seen the burning bush and his ears had heard the call of God to be Israel's deliverer. His hand had stretched out over Egypt and overwhelmed it with the plagues. His was the face that had reflected the divine glory of the mount after forty days of fellowship with Jehovah, during which time he received the law. This was the faithful and tried man who had often been wrongly accused, who had meekly borne so many trials, who had guided the people so faithfully and advised them so wisely, and who had refused, both from men and from God, honors for himself because he loved them so well. How they must have regretted their wicked murmurings against him! How their love for him must have asserted itself and caused them to wish he could live! How they must have hung on those last words! And the echo of his last words had hardly died away until his spirit had been called above and unseen, divine hands had laid him in an unknown tomb.

Character of Moses and Significance of His Work

1. *His Character.* In the study of the life and work of Moses one discovers several of the finest elements of genuine manhood. He was bold and courageous in spirit, but was not bigoted or overconfident. He would not gain personal honor or promotion at the expense and loss of others, and was without any element of jealousy. He could overcome all human difficulties, such as the cowardly discontent of the people, the disloyalty of leaders

and the jealousy of his kindred. His finest quality was a prophetic faith which saw the possible future of Israel and inspired Israel to attain it.

2. *Significance of His Work.* It would be next to impossible to exaggerate the significance of the work of Moses. Humanly speaking, he explains the great difference between the Hebrews and the people who were kindred to them. He accounts for Israel's development from a company of disheartened slaves and from the careless habits of wandering tribes into a conquering nation. He was a leader, and as such heartened and disciplined them. He was a prophet, and as such taught them the principles necessary for their higher development. He was a law-giver, and as such furnished them with laws that changed them into a sober, healthful, moral and right-minded people. He was the founder of a religion, and as such gave them a conception of Jehovah and His requirements which stimulated in them real loyalty to Him and growth in goodness.

Value of the Wilderness Experiences

During all these years they have been gradually learning the principles of their national life. Those who came out of Egypt were haughty, impatient, unbelieving and rebellious, but those who finally went into Canaan were far more submissive to divine providence, far less self-willed, and more responsive to leadership. Their hardships gradually, but most certainly, gave them habits of courage, persistence, self-denial, physical strength and endurance and skill in warfare. They learned something of the importance of combined action which aided them greatly in defending themselves later. Little is known of their social condition while on these wanderings, but there was some skill as shown in the erection of the tabernacle and in the making of the garments for the priests. For the most part we can imagine that they did not develop, but the law of Moses did teach them, the finest ethical principles and thus laid the foundation for the finest family and social relations. The greatest of all changes and those that have most valuable significance were the religious changes, which will be discussed in the next topic.

Religious Changes of the Wilderness

Before they entered the wilderness the Word of God was handed down from parent to child; now it is committed to writing and given to them as a permanent possession. The rules of worship had been very few and simple, but now they became many and elaborate. During the time of the patriarchs there was no special class of priests, but now the whole family of Aaron became a priesthood and was supported by the other tribes. One of the most significant things in the system was the very vital way in which they connected temporal rewards and punishments with religion. The changes were such that they came into Canaan with a greatly improved religious system in which were many types and symbols of Jesus and His work of salvation.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER VIII

THEIR STRUGGLE FOR A HOME

Scripture Account: Joshua

Preliminary Considerations

The Land of Canaan.

Its Geography.

Its Inhabitants and Neighboring Nations.

Conditions Favorable to Its Conquest.

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Struggle for a Home

Duration and Nature of the Struggle.

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Conquering and Settling the Land.

The Country Conquered.

The Land Divided.

Joshua's Last Counsel and Death.

Important Special Matters

Israel's Cruelty to the Canaanites.

Significance of this War of Conquest.

Character and Work of Joshua.

Settlement of Canaan a Forward Move.

Religious Spirit During the Time of the Conquest.

CHAPTER VIII

THEIR STRUGGLE FOR A HOME

Scripture Account: Joshua

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The Land of Canaan

1. *Its Geography.* The land of Canaan is about one hundred and fifty miles long and fifty to seventy-five miles wide. It is made up of plains, valleys, plateaus, gorges and mountains fashioned together in wonderful variety. Few small bodies of land were capable of supporting a group in such seclusion as to allow them to develop their own individuality and become independent. Lying between Egypt and Babylonia as it did, it became the bridge for the civilization and commerce of the world and furnished a home where the Hebrews could easily keep in touch with world events.

2. *Its Inhabitants and Neighboring Nations.* The land of Canaan was densely populated with many war-like peoples; but the seven most important were the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Amorites and the Canaanites. The Canaanites who had been there for about six centuries, and the Amorites who had lived there for about ten centuries, were the two peoples that furnished the greatest resistance to Israel's occupancy of the country. Around Palestine were many kingdoms, some large and strong, some small and weak, each of which furnished a problem for Israel. Among the more important were the Philistines, west of Judah, the Phœnician Kingdom on the north, the Arameans or Syrians on the northeast, and on the east and southeast, the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites, the last three being kinsmen of the Hebrews, descendants of Lot and Esau.

3. *Conditions Favorable to Its Conquest.* In the providence of God the Hebrews seem to have entered Canaan

at exactly the right time. Egypt had so crushed the Hittites that they could not make a powerful resistance. Northern hordes had also broken the power of the Canaanites and of Egypt. Assyria had grown in power until she was feared by all nations. Babylonia could not displace Assyria but could so dispute her supremacy that neither could assume the role of a world power. These weaknesses among the nations continued two hundred years. During this time the Hebrews developed and grew strong, being greatly favored by the weakened condition on all sides.

Facts of History Recorded

The history recorded here follows closely upon and completes the Exodus story of deliverance. But for the sin of Israel in believing the false spies and turning back into the wilderness the last twenty-one chapters of Numbers and the book of Deuteronomy would not have been written. The book of Joshua would have followed Exodus and Leviticus and would have formed an unbroken story of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the journey to Canaan. Taken as a whole, the story falls into three parts: (1) The conquest of the territory, chapters 1-12. (2) The division of the land among the tribes, chapters 13-22. (3) Joshua's last counsel and death, chapters 23 and 24.

STRUGGLE FOR A HOME

Duration and Nature of the Struggle

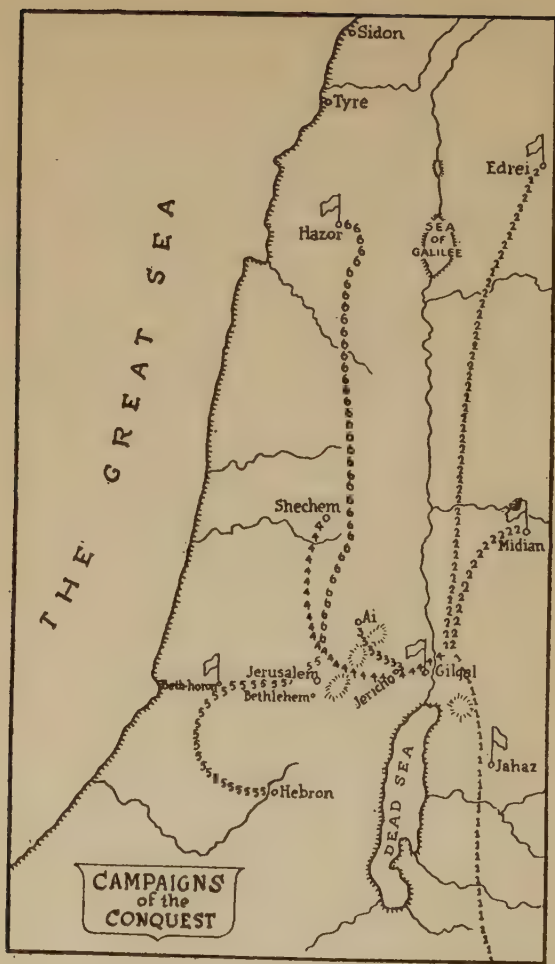
The war proper lasted only about seven years, but the entire period of subjugation lasted at least twenty-five and probably fifty one years. In all this struggle one feels that the desire for a permanent home is moving Israel. From the time of Abraham they had been promised this land, and Moses inspired them to endeavor to free themselves from Pharaoh in the hope that they should come to a country of their own. Their forty years of wandering in the wilderness had made them anxious for such a settled home. Moreover, the efforts of the people who impeded their journey toward Canaan conspired to make them want such a home, and their successes gave them confidence in fighting for it.

A Test of Their Faith

Frequently God tested the faith of His people. Such tests gave Him an opportunity to increase that faith by working wonders for them. Here was such a test. First of all the crossing of the Jordan seemed impossible. Being the flood season, it was a half mile or a mile wide, and there was no means at hand by which all their families and cattle and goods could be transported. Then, too, the first step required that everything be carried over into this enemy country. If they were unsuccessful, they with their women and children would perish and all their possessions would be lost. There would be no conference for treaties. They would be as hostile enemies in the country belonging to others and would be forced against great odds to conquer or perish. Such a situation would test their faith, whether or not it was the conquering kind. Their marching over the Jordan was their worthy and confident response in this test.

Crossing the Jordan and the Fall of Jericho

Jehovah now came down and commissioned Joshua as the successor of Moses and gave him assurance of victory. Joshua notified the people to prepare to cross the Jordan in three days. He also sent forward two men who visited the territory of Jericho, promised to save the household of Rahab, who had aided them in escaping from the King of Jericho, and brought Joshua news of the fears the people had of Israel. Then came the crossing of the Jordan and the fall of Jericho. In their literature, the Hebrews regarded these two great events through which they entered Canaan, their permanent home, as of importance similar to their deliverance from Egypt. The divine share in these great accomplishments was fully recognized. He it was that caused the waters of the Jordan to separate for their passage, and He it was that threw down the walls of Jericho. The advantage of this victory to Israel can hardly be estimated. Jericho occupied a strategic position, somewhat apart from other Canaanite cities, and the marvelous manner of its fall both encouraged the Hebrews and brought fear and expectations of defeat to the Canaanites.



Conquering and Settling the Land

1. *The Country Conquered.* Israel contended against a far superior civilization, but won because the religious as well as the civil and social life was involved. A whirlwind campaign crushed the active and dangerous opposition. Then by a piecemeal process the various cities and independent tribes were subdued. The Jordan was crossed and Jericho was taken. They pushed their way into the heart of the land and, after first being defeated because of the sin of Achan, captured Ai, established their central camp at Gilgal (5: 10; 9: 6), and celebrated the success with a solemn feast at Shechem. By two whirlwind campaigns, one in the south and one in the north, Joshua quickly ended the combined resistance of the Canaanites. Two battles here were noteworthy, one in the north in which he defeated a confederacy headed by Jabin, a powerful chief of Hazor; one in the south during which the day was lengthened at the command of Joshua, and the five kings who conspired to destroy the Gibeonites were defeated. Partly by the sword and partly by the peaceable measures of inter-marriage and treaties with friendly neighbors the rest of the territory was gradually subdued.

2. *The Land Divided.* Joshua with the help of Eleazar, the high priest, and the heads of tribes divided the territory among the tribes. The Levites were given forty-eight cities well scattered throughout the land. Among them were six cities of refuge planned for the protection of innocent and accidental murderers and furnishing a needed protest against the spirit of revenge and mob law in the administration of punishment upon criminals. The twelve tribes were now permanently settled in their own territory.

Joshua's Last Counsel and Death

It is now about twenty years since the division of the land among the tribes, and Joshua is the only living man who witnessed the power of God in Egypt. Realizing that he must soon die, he called together the representatives of all Israel and delivered to them a farewell message. He recounted their victories, reminded them of their deliverance by the Lord, admonished them to serve Him and warned them against disobeying His will. He

put before them the alternative of serving Jehovah or other and false gods, and after causing them to renew their covenant with Jehovah he set up a memorial of it at Shechem. Soon after this he died and was buried in his inheritance in Ephraim. His death was followed by that of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, who was high priest. The people now buried the bones of Joseph which had been brought out of Egypt.

IMPORTANT SPECIAL MATTERS

Israel's Cruelty to the Canaanites

It is a waste of sympathy for us to sympathize with the Canaanites because of Israel's cruelty to them. The Scripture always emphasizes the wickedness of the Canaanites and speaks of their overthrow as a punishment for their sins. (Deut. 9: 4, 5; Lev. 18: 24, 25). One shudders to read such passages as Lev. 18: 21-30 and Deut. 12: 30-32 in which are described their abominations practiced in the name of religion. Their chief god, Baal, and his consort, Astaroth, fostered cruelty in their worship, together with impurity and lustful abominations which are almost inconceivable in our times. This impurity and lewdness must be punished and the Hebrews are the divine instrument, as were the waters of the flood and the fire and brimstone in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moreover the Hebrews were to found a new religious civilization and this method of punishment of the wicked Canaanites would impress them with the terrible consequences of forsaking the worship of the true God. We need not worry. They are reaping what they had sown and God is setting forward His enterprise.

Significance of this War of Conquest

Of all the wars recorded in human history this was one of the greatest in its far-reaching consequences. Its purpose and valuable results are emphasized in four ways. (1) It was a war for purification. The individual, the home and the nation must be purified. (2) It was a war for civil liberty. Israel was no longer to be subjugated, but, under God, was to govern herself and thereby to give the world a pattern of government as God's free

nation. (3) It was a war for religious liberty. Idolatry with its vice and superstition was dominant everywhere. This worship must be dispossessed and the people must be free to worship the one true God and Creator of all. (4) It was a war for the whole world. Israel was to be a blessing to all nations. Out of Israel and out of this land was to come Christ, who should save all nations. The outcome of it involved all that the Hebrews meant to the world and all that Christianity means to it.

Character and Work of Joshua

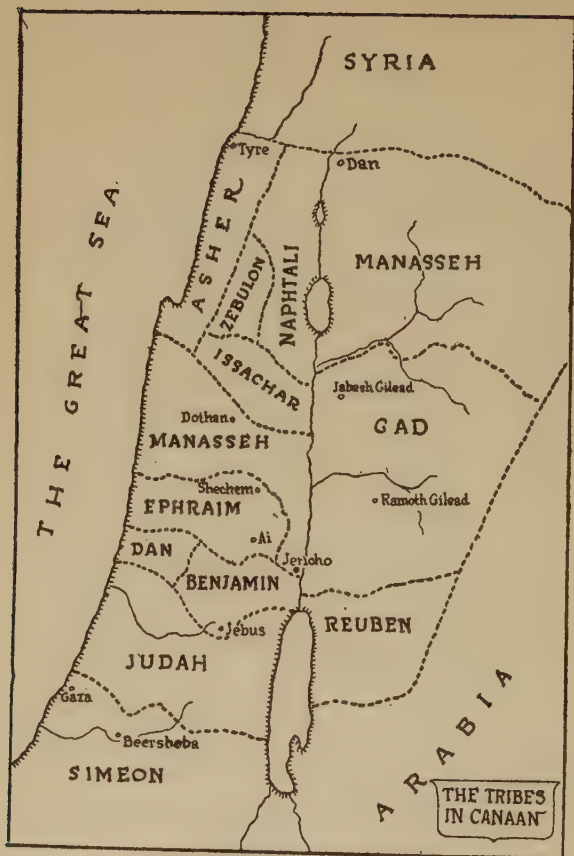
The work of Joshua made a deep impression upon Israel in this formative period of Israel's history. He was called of God and set apart to the task of subjugating the Canaanites and proved himself worthy in several ways. As a soldier and commander he was resourceful, brave, straightforward, fertile in strategy and quick to strike. As a statesman he was wise and generous and showed his ability by mapping out the boundaries of the tribes and by peaceably and permanently settling them in their several territories. In the matter of religion he was actuated by a spirit of implicit obedience to God and by an abounding faith in His benevolent purpose and firmness, and his dying charge was full of religious devotion.

Settlement of Canaan a Forward Move

When Israel entered Palestine they ceased to range about with their cattle; they dwelt in cities, owned their lands and tilled the soil as farmers. This led to rapid advancement along many lines. They were bound more closely together and could develop a real national organization. By contact with a complex and cultured social life in Canaan they could better develop their own customs along right lines. Because of their permanent abode they saw clearly the share that the community, the family and the individual should have in religious life and activity. In the main they are true to Jehovah, and their location in Palestine proved a long step forward.

Religious Spirit During the Time of the Conquest

The religious spirit of the nation at the time when Joshua took command was very good. The experiences of the wilderness, its discipline in privation and in their



contemporary civilization of themselves in the world, had greatly increased. For years they have been struggling for a name and by the help of God they have won it. What about the effect on their religion? They have come into a period of prosperity and worldly comfort and, as has often happened, prosperity proved more dangerous to the religion than was the period of suffering. During the entire period nothing important was added to their religious experience. What was worse, they closed the books with the new era and history that existed at the beginning.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER IX

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL UNITY

Scripture Account: Judges 1—1 Samuel 7

The Time of the Judges

- Characteristics of the Time.
- Other Nations of the Time.
- Dangers and Problems of Israel.
 - Danger of Being Exterminated.
 - Danger of Changed Occupations and Conditions.
 - Danger of a Breakdown of Government.
 - Danger of Social Entanglements.
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Life and Work of the Judges

- Outline of the Narrative.
 - Nature and Work of the Judges.
 - Six Military Judges and Their Work.
 - Eli and Samuel.

Best and Worst Conditions

- Three Stories of Evil.
 - The Image of Micah.
 - The Migration of the Danites.
 - The Tragedy or Crime of Gibeah.
- Two Stories of Purer Life.
 - The Story of Ruth, the Moabitess.
 - The Boy Samuel and His Mother.
- Extremes in Ethical Standards.
- State of Religion.

CHAPTER IX

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL UNITY

Scripture Account: Judges 1—1 Samuel 7

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

Characteristics of the Time

This was a time of transition for Israel. They were loosely held together by a common ancestry, history, language and religion, but there was no national organization, no national capital and no national head. Each tribe governed its own affairs and the events of this period show us the struggle through which they passed in attaining to a national unity. It was a time of great uncertainty and confusion because "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17: 6); it was also a time of great sinfulness (Judg. 2: 16-19). The condition is summed up in the oft-repeated statement, "The children of Israel did evil in the eyes of the Lord," and "The Lord sold them into the hand of the oppressor" (Judg. 2: 14, etc.) Because of this condition it has been called the Dark Ages of Israel's history. It was a hard school for them, but it was not all bad. After the victory of each judge there was a period of rest and the aggregate of these years was three times as long as the years of oppression. It was a time of progress during which they abandoned tribal communism, got a firmer grip on God, learned to associate themselves together for the common good, and laid the foundation upon which the great kingdom was later to be built.

Other Nations of the Time

The Arameans, Amorites, Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, Philistines and Canaanites were bitter enemies of Israel and were closely in touch with them. Other nations of the time were: Egypt, adorned with wonderful buildings, prosperous in religion and famous for learning;

Assyria, soon to become the most powerful of all; Babylonia, now weak among the nations; Phoenicia, the greatest of the commercial countries; and Greece, the most interesting of them all.

Dangers and Problems of Israel

Because of their own condition already described, and because of the hostility of the surrounding nations, and for the further reason that several of the tribes did not wholly drive out and destroy all the inhabitants of their territory, several problems and points of danger arose for Israel. Apart from the displeasure of Jehovah, which they had brought upon themselves, five elements of danger are outstanding.

1. *Danger of being Exterminated.* They were completely surrounded by hostile foes and must either crowd out these powerful neighbors or themselves be assimilated or destroyed. The outcome would depend upon the vigor of the campaign they waged. Their danger was greatly increased by the isolated condition of the tribes and by their lack of any strong bond of unity.

2. *Danger of Changed Occupations and Conditions.* Can these shepherds of the wilderness succeed as farmers, vine-dressers and traders? Can these nomads cease to rove around and live successfully in walled cities and villages and hope to survive the disease that would follow? Such a change in occupation and such an adjustment to new conditions would test their intelligence, their physical endurance and their courage and determination.

3. *Danger of a Breakdown of Government.* They were a democratic people and their desert life had tended to give the same rights and privileges to all their families and tribes. Can such a democracy hold together in a contest with other nations? Or will the success in war attained by neighboring autocracies lead them to abandon the blessings of democracy and seek the external glory of such autocracy?

4. *Danger of Social Entanglements.* This was a very grave matter. Living among the Canaanites as they did, the Israelites would easily adopt certain of their customs and habits of life. There was also intermarriage of the Jews with their new neighbors in Canaan. These things led to such entanglements and brought their families into

such compromising relations that it became difficult for them to remain true Hebrews.

5. *Danger of False Worship.* Baal was thought to control the land of Canaan and was heralded as the god of crops and the farm, while Jehovah was considered, at least by others, as the God of shepherds. They were no longer shepherds and would be tempted to worship Baal in the hope of making good crops. Then, too, Baal worship ministered to their lusts while the religion of Israel required purity and self-denial. It would be easy to rasp under the restraints of one and to long for the indulgences of the other. Here was a danger lest the true worship of the true God should break down.

LIFE AND WORK OF THE JUDGES

Outline of the Narrative

The Scripture narrative of these stories is more than a record of historical events. It includes in the record an interpretation of the facts in terms of religion. Six well-defined sections make up the story: (1) An introduction, or the condition of Palestine at the beginning of the period (Judg. 1: 1—3: 6.). (2) The Judges and their work (Judg. 3: 7—16: 31). (3) Micah's idolatry (Judg. 17, 18). (4) The crime of Gibeah (Judg. 19—21). (5) The story of Ruth (the Book of Ruth). (6) The career of Samuel, including the Judgeship of Eli (1 Sam. 1—7).

Nature and Work of the Judges

As indicated above, the Israelites from time to time sinned against God, especially in the matter of worshipping idols, and He allowed them to be scourged by the oppression of other nations. There was no central government that could protect them, but on occasions God raised up military leaders called judges who delivered them. These judges were not ideal men, but they did believe in God and were patriots who rose above tribal jealousies and made themselves benefactors and heroes of the faith. Counting Samuel and Eli, there were fifteen judges, and they made their day one of conspicuous personal heroism.

Six Military Judges and Their Work

Of seven of the judges we know very little except that they rendered conspicuous services to their people and

were greatly honored by them. Six commonly called military judges were brought forward by as many invasions of foreign nations. (1) *Othniel*, the nephew of Caleb, delivered Israel from the Mesopotamians who had oppressed them for eight years. (2) *Ehud*, a left-handed Benjaminite, slew the King of Moab and delivered the southeastern tribes out of the power of the Moabites. (3) *Deborah*, assisted by Barak, broke the yoke of the Canaanites who, under the leadership of Jabin, King of Hazor, had terribly oppressed them for twenty years. (4) *Gideon* delivered them from the devastations of the Midianites who descended upon them each year at harvest time and carried away their crops. The very life of Israel was endangered, and they so appreciated Gideon's work that they offered to make him their king, but he refused, saying, "The Lord will rule over you." (5) *Jephthah*, a low-born freebooter and disinherited outlaw, was recalled and put at the head of their forces and defeated the Ammonites, who had invaded their territory. (6) *Samson* came next and was successful in partially overthrowing the Philistines who had sorely oppressed them. His life was so mixed with good and bad that it forms a veritable riddle, but the study of it will yield many valuable lessons of moral, social and religious import.

Eli and Samuel

While they performed many duties in common with the judges, Eli and Samuel differed so widely from them that they are often not counted among them. Eli was high priest as well as judge. He was a good but weak man, and by allowing the gross sins of his sons to go unpunished caused their ruin, brought sorrow upon himself and became responsible for the severe defeat of Israel. Samuel was both judge and priest and prophet, and ranks along with Abraham and Joseph and Moses and Joshua. As judge he won a notable victory over the Philistines. As prophet he founded schools for the instruction of the prophets. In the schools he prepared religious leaders for the people, and in this work probably rendered his most valuable service. As priest he anointed Saul to be king, and after his rejection anointed David. He was the last and greatest of the judges and the first of the great line of Hebrew prophets after Moses. He, therefore,

belongs to the period of transition from the judges to the monarchy and forms the bridge that connects the old order and the new.

BEST AND WORST CONDITIONS

Three Stories of Evil

The book of Judges closes with three stories of the worst social and religious conditions of the time. As a whole these three stories reveal to us a spirit of dishonesty and theft, of idolatry and superstition, of lawlessness and cruelty, of lust and adultery, of passion and cruel revenge, of deceit and murder that could hardly be surpassed in all history. The three stories are as follows:

1. *The Image of Micah.* Micah was a young Ephraimite who engaged in religious ceremonies as an honor to himself, but had no inward reverence for God. He stole his mother's money and later used a part of it to make an image for a family God. He used first his son and later employed a Levite for the priest of this shrine. Some Danite immigrants carried this image and priest into the north country where it became a sort of rival of the tabernacle which had been established at Shiloh.

2. *The Migration of the Danites.* Part of the tribe of Dan, because their territory was so small and their foes so strong that they could not develop, migrated to Laish, a peaceable Zidonian or Phœnician settlement situated far in the north at the foot of Mount Hermon. On their way they seized and carried off Micah's image and priest through whom they had received encouragement while seeking the new home. On arriving at Laish, they suddenly attacked and destroyed it, seized the lands and killed the people.

3. *The Tragedy or Crime of Gibeah.* This story gives us a shocking picture of brutal immorality and shows the awful and unreasonable punishment which the excited passion of the mob spirit drove the people to administer. The wife of a Levite was savagely abused and murdered at Gibeah, a town of Benjamin, and the other tribes fell upon them and slew all of the tribe but six hundred men. To their sorrow their fury and vengeance not only punished the innocent, but almost exterminated a tribe.

Two Stories of Purer Life

In contrast with the stories of idolatry and sin, and especially in contrast with the story of the idolatry of Micah and the crime of Gibeah found in the last chapters of Judges, we have two stories that tell us something of the finer life of those rude days.

1. *The Story of Ruth, the Moabitess.* This book was originally a part of the book of Judges, being one of the several stories of the appendix, as are the evil stories of chapters 16—21 already discussed. It affords us an idyllic glance into the home life during the time of the judges. It testifies that in the midst of the irregularities there was a God-fearing, friendly, industrious and happy community and family life in Israel. Others had turned away from the true God to false gods, but Ruth turned from false gods to Jehovah, the one true God. Ruth's love enabled her to make the choice of faith by which she married Boaz, a Bethlehemite, and become the ancestress of David and Mary and Jesus.

2. *The Boy Samuel and His Mother.* The story, given in the early chapters of First Samuel, is scarcely less instructive and beautiful than that of Ruth. It describes the noble religious qualities of Samuel's mother, which were the shaping cause of his greatness and shows how great a place godly women had in the uplift of the Hebrew people. Samuel was given in answer to her prayers; he was dedicated by her to the service of God and was reared in vital contact with Eli, the aged priest, and with the service of the sanctuary. Such experiences led him to be sober-minded, clear-thinking and of a deeply religious bent. It would be difficult to find a more devout and loving mother, and equally difficult to find a more faithful and promising son.

Extremes in Ethical Standards

The following will indicate the differences in moral and religious standards which this transition period developed: Murdering a heathen enemy was counted a virtue; to steal from another Hebrew tribe was not considered a crime; might was right no matter whom it injured; a foolish vow must be kept, even if it cost the life of one's own child, as in the case of Jephthah. Worse principles than these could hardly be found. On the other hand there

were some fine principles. They held sacred the marriage relation, regarded all covenants as sacred and binding, and counted inhospitality a crime. There were also some strange inconsistencies. Micah would steal his mother's silver and use part of it to make an altar to Jehovah; Samson would keep his Nazarite vow, preserve intact his hair which emblemized his Nazarite consecration, and would abstain from wine and unclean food, but he would also give himself over to lying, to sinful passions and self-indulgences, and fail to observe the simple laws of justice, mercy and service.

State of Religion

The period of struggle under the judges produced nothing new in religion. There were no new revelations except in so far as the several judges in their work of delivering the people pointed to Jesus, the coming One. By His providences God continually reminded them of His hatred of sin and of the certainty of His punishment of it. Everything was calculated to stimulate genuine faith. The great elements of true piety, manifest at least in a few, and probably in a great many, during portions of this time were a humble sense of personal unworthiness, a spirit of trust in undeserved mercy and forgiveness and a steady and prayerful effort to do all that was well pleasing to God.

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PERIOD FOUR

THE HEBREW KINGDOM

Time—From the beginning of the kingdom to the captivity of Judah.

CHAPTER X. The Kingdom Rises to its Glory,
or
The Reign of Saul and of David.

CHAPTER XI. The Reign of Solomon and Division of
the Kingdom.

CHAPTER XII. The Two Kingdoms to the Fall of Israel.

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SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER X

THE KINGDOM RISES TO ITS GLORY OR THE REIGN OF SAUL AND OF DAVID

Scripture Account: 1 Samuel 8—31, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings
1: 1—2: 12, 1 Chronicles 10—29.

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- Conditions at the Close of the Last Period.
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CHAPTER X

THE KINGDOM RISES TO ITS GLORY.

OR

THE REIGN OF SAUL AND OF DAVID

Scripture Account: 1 Samuel 8—31, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings
1: 1—2: 12, 1 Chronicles 10—29.

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

Change of Government

With the inauguration of Saul as king (1 Sam. 11: 15) we meet another complete change in the nation's life. The period extends to the captivity of Judah (B.C. 587) and is called the period of the Hebrew Kingdom, or period of Regal Administration. The people were ruled over by kings, who were not independent despots, but who as representatives of God were expected to administer a theocratic government.

Conditions at the Close of the Last Period

1. *As to Religion.* Israel came from an idolatrous ancestry (Gen. 31: 19; 35: 2; Josh. 24: 2, 14). Abraham broke away from idolatry, but through intermarriage it again entered into the family. The Israelites were probably deeply influenced by idolatry in Egypt; they practiced it in the wilderness, making and worshiping the golden calf, and after settlement in Canaan they were urged by Joshua to turn away from false gods (Josh. 24: 14). In Canaan they met with religions which were licentious and most debasing. Because they yielded to these religions God allowed them to be brought into cruel bondage to other nations. These lapses and oppressions led to the conditions described in the Judges and taught them the need of a better bond of union, that all of them might act in harmony, and that no single tribe might endanger the life of all. When the period closed they did have a fine type of family religion (1 Sam. 1: 3, 4, 9-18, 22, 24-28; 2: 18-20;



9: 14, 22-24; 20: 6, 29) which was an active and powerful force and did much in the way of preparing them for the new period.

2. *As to Their National Life.* The conditions existing at the close of the last period did much to determine the character of life in this period. They had become quite well established in their permanent home, and the country was divided into four divisions very like the New Testament divisions called Judah, Samaria, Galilee and Perea. They had gained much from the high civilization of Canaan that would help them in the affairs of their kingdom. They had become very democratic and were slow to recognize anyone as permanent leader, but had a splendid sense of unity and could get together when their interests demanded it.

Life of the People During this Period

During this period the life of the people was far from ideal. Many new customs were adopted. There was a great increase of wealth, but it was created in a way that made the rich richer and the poor poorer. There was a large growth in the number of those living in the city, and a corresponding growth in the evils of luxury, self-indulgence and licentiousness. Commerce was extended and with it came many vices. Life became more and more complex, and slavery and all the sins characteristic of an age of worldly show and magnificence were indulged. The prevalence of sooth-saying, or fortune telling, showed a low standard of intellectual attainment, as well as a degraded religious life. It was a counterfeit of the wonderful privilege of the Jews to know the will of God.

Demand for a King

1. *From Their Own Situation.* The demand for a king arose first of all out of their national situation. They felt the need of a strong national bond. The wise reign of Samuel had given them a national consciousness and a desire for a more stable and united national government. The failure of Samuel's sons in the power that had been given them made it clear that they could not carry forward his work and accentuated the need that something should be done before his death. Then, too, the victories of the Philistines over them would be interpreted to mean that

Jehovah could not protect them. It was a religious crisis which made it imperative that they unite in defeating these enemies, and as a nation to represent Jehovah and His worship among the nations.

2. *From Other Nations.* Other nations also contributed to their desire for a king. It seemed necessary as a protection against strong people like the Philistines who had already devastated their country and threatened to further oppress them. Then, too, the nations around them, such as Egypt and Assyria, with their seats of royalty and their strength in war, had excited their pride and they were moved with a desire to be like their heathen neighbors.

Principles of the Kingdom

The people were wrong in wanting a king like other nations, and in the spirit of forgetfulness of God with which they made the request. Indeed, Moses had provided for a kingdom and had given the law upon which the king was to rule (Deut. 17: 14-20). He was to be unlike other kings and was not to rule according to his own will or that of the people, but according to the will of Jehovah. He was to be subject to God as was the humblest Israelite, and under His immediate direction was to rule for the good of the people. This was a new principle that showed itself in all the future history of Israel. Saul attempted to be like other kings and to assert his own will. He disobeyed God and was deposed, while David identified himself with God and His purposes and was successful. One represents the ideal of the people, the other that of God.

SAUL THE FIRST KING

His Election

Saul's rise to the position of king was a gradual process. First of all he was privately anointed by Samuel when in search of his father's asses. Then in a national assembly called at Mizpah, Samuel had him elected king. Some, however, did not want him and he quietly waited till Jabesh-Gilead was threatened by the Ammonites. He mustered three thousand men from the tribes and destroyed these Ammonite oppressors and, thereby, ended

all opposition to himself, won royal recognition and was crowned king over all the tribes (1 Sam. 11).

His Strength and Weakness

Saul began his career under the most auspicious circumstances. He was a man of courage and enthusiasm and was able to command the obedience of all their rival factions. He was a man of wealth and influence, but his tribe was in the midway between the north and south and was of such little importance among them as to prevent any jealousy on the part of the stronger tribes. He had a fine physical appearance, and in the early days he charms us with his modesty. Samuel supported him with his influence and the people gave him allegiance, and he was for a while subservient to the will of God, and greatly prospered. Later he became self-willed and acted as if the nation was his instead of God's. He developed a spirit of disobedience, perverseness and evil conduct that mark him as insane. He disregarded both the rights of men and the laws of God. Because he thus resisted the Spirit of God he was rejected by the Lord and was allowed to reap the fruit of his own way and fail.

His Great Achievements

The summary of his work as given in 1 Sam. 14: 47-52 shows that his reign was full of activity. He acted as a sort of chieftain and was a rough-and-ready democratic sovereign. He at once dealt with Israel's enemies, and besides the deliverance of Jabesh-Gilead mentioned above he was successful in the following campaigns:

1. *Against the Philistines* (1 Sam. 13—14). The most notable event of the war against these oppressors of Israel was his victory at Michmash. This was a genuine campaign for freedom and was eminently successful. Jonathan and his armor-bearer by attack upon the Philistines threw them into utter confusion and enabled Saul to drive them panic-stricken out of the territory. Before the battle he disobeyed the will of God by performing the duties of a priest and was told that he should lose his kingdom. At the close of the campaign he proposed to kill Jonathan, his son, the hero of the day, because he had unwittingly disobeyed a foolish command. In this he was prevented by the people.

2. *Later Campaigns.* 1 Sam. 14: 47 tells us of successful campaigns against Moab, Ammon, Edom and Zobab, but does not give us any details. 1 Sam. 15 tells us of a victorious war against the Amalekites in which he disobeyed God in not wholly destroying Amalek and all his possessions and lost the help and influence of Samuel. It was after this battle that David was anointed to become king and Saul's decline began.

His Decline

From chapter 16 on, the narrative tells of the rapid decline of Saul and of the rise of David to the kingship.

(1) There is the story of the madness of Saul and the introduction of David to the court as the king's musician. (2) The campaign against the Philistines in which David killed Goliath and won great honor from the king. (3) His effort to destroy David. On account of sickness or other cause he seems to have had fits of insanity, and through bitter jealousy and insane hatred tried for many years to kill David, whom God always delivered out of his hand. (4) His last battle and death. The Philistines arrayed themselves against Saul and he tried to get in touch with Samuel. In this act he abandoned God and turned to the witch of Endor to learn his fortunes in the impending battle. He finally met a death in harmony with his life, and thus ended one of the most melancholy careers of all history (1 Chron. 10: 13, 14).

His Character and Reign

Saul was not a builder of cities, not a political organizer, not a patron of literature, not a promoter of religion, but he did much to challenge our admiration and deserves a higher place in the roll of Old Testament heroes than we are accustomed to give him. Besides the successful military campaigns discussed above, two lines of thought may well impress us.

1. *His Accomplishments.* He kept back from the throne and palace that wave of oriental luxury that later engulfed Israel. He gave the people high and democratic ideals that were always their defense against royal oppression. He outlawed witchcraft and similar arts from his realm and thereby showed that he had advanced thoughts concerning religion. In it all he was blazing the way. He was

pioneering, while the kings that followed had the advantage of his reign. This makes his reign appear more significant.

2. *David's Estimate of His Worth.* David's lament at the news of Saul's death was evidently sincere, and he doubtless knew his worth. He calls upon all nations and even all nature to join in universal grief, and suggests that it is horrible to exult over the fall of so great a man. He praises the prowess, the courage and the virtue of Saul and reminds the women of Israel of the great service Saul had rendered them. Such a statement impresses us with the greatness of Saul and makes us feel that he was the victim of a mental disorder that at times made him an irresponsible despot instead of the noble and generous chieftain that he had been in earlier years.

DAVID THE IDEAL KING

His Youth

David was the son of Jesse and the grandson of Ruth and Boaz. He was of the tribe descended from Judah who was the recipient of the patriarchal blessing (Gen. 49: 8-12). He was born at Bethlehem where later Jesus was born. He was a shepherd and learned to endure hardships and to be watchful, and was so courageous that he slew a bear and a lion in defense of his flock. After the rejection of Saul, Samuel, under divine direction, went to the home of David and secretly anointed him as king (1 Sam. 16: 2-13). Later, when Saul was in war against the Philistines, David visited his brethren who were in Saul's army and while there slew Goliath, a Philistine giant, who was defying the men of Israel. This act won him the love of Jonathan, the love and praises of the people, and it caused him to be made a member of Saul's military household.

His Experiences at Saul's Court

1. *The Experiences.* Soon after David's anointing, an evil spirit possessed Saul, and David was chosen as court musician in the hope that his gentle strains might drive away the evil spirit. Saul knew he had been rejected, and after the slaying of Goliath by David he seemed to suspect that David had been destined for the kingship and

became insanely jealous of him. He deceived David about giving him his daughter for a wife, and twice tried to kill him by throwing his javelin at him. In it all David was modest and tried to do right. Here also he gained the confidence of Jonathan, which was of great service to him.

2. *Their Significance.* In his experiences at the court God was preparing him to be king. He was gaining skill and courage for the contests he would yet have. He gained knowledge of the affairs of the state and an acquaintance with the men who were shaping the affairs of the nation, as well as with the real needs of the people. In the course of his career there he was able to win the favor of all classes. He also learned the military tactics and equipment of his day, and how to direct or lead great companies of men. All of this prepared him for success later.

An Outlaw Chieftain

After leaving the court of Saul, David spent several years as an outlaw, continually hunted by Saul and betrayed by the people whom he had befriended. In Nob he was kindly treated by the priest; in Gath of Philistia he was discovered and only escaped by feigning madness; in the cave of Adullam where he was in hiding he gathered around him a group of men and led them in a sort of bandit warfare. On a second visit to Philistia he was kindly treated, but only the jealousy of the Philistines saved him from being urged to join them in a campaign against his own people. During all this time Saul hunted him to kill him. Twice David showed his reverence for God's anointed by refusing to kill Saul, when he had him in his power. After Saul's defeat and death David returned home and soon became king.

His Reign as King

One wonders what kind of king this outlaw will make. Will he seek vengeance upon his foes and try to enrich himself? He had formerly spared Saul and others who had injured him. Now he shows kindness to the men of Jabesh-Gilead who gave Saul an honorable burial and executes an Amalekite who sought a reward for slaying him. This was a fine start.

1. *Reign at Hebron.* The first seven and a half years his capital was at Hebron and he only ruled Judah, while Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, reigned over Israel in the

north. There was constant warfare between these two rival kings, both of whom probably paid tribute to the Philistines. But "David waxed stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" (2 Sam. 3: 1). Seeing this, Abner undertook negotiations looking to the union of the two kingdoms, but was treacherously killed by Joab. This act of Abner in coming to David was in reality one of secession and was soon followed by the murder of Ishbosheth and the utter failure of Saul's kingdom.

2. *Reign Over All Israel.* Saul's kingdom having fallen, Israel assembled in great numbers at Hebron and asked David to become king over all the nation. This reign lasted thirty-three years and was the ideal reign in all the history of the Hebrews. It falls into two distinct parts. (1) A time of growing power. The Philistines sent an army into his territory, but David finally gave them such a crushing blow as to compel a lasting peace. He was now free to develop his kingdom. He moved his capital to Jebus, or Jerusalem, and quickly conquered the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites and Syrians. This enlarged his borders in every direction and made him master of all the territory from Egypt to the Euphrates. Considered from every point of view the kingdom was now at its best. Even Hiram king of Tyre became his life-long friend. (2) A time of decline. David was great in war and in civic organization, but he was not above temptation. And having begun a course of sin, his whole career was darkened with domestic and internal troubles and his reign ended in a cloud.

His Great Sin and its Bitter Consequences

1. *His Sin.* David's high ideals and noble chivalry could not withstand the enervating influence of his growing harem. The degrading influence of polygamy with its luxury, pleasure seeking, and jealousies was soon to undermine his character. His sins and weak indulgences were destined to work family and national disaster. These sins reached a climax in his trespass with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. This crime stands out as one of the darkest of all history, including deceit, murder, adultery, and several other crimes and "shows what terrible remnants of sin there are in the hearts even of converted men." In

this sin he fell from the exalted position of a righteous and religious ruler to the level of an unprincipled eastern monarch.

2. *Its Consequences.* While God forgave David for this sin, its terrible consequences in his family and nation could not be removed. The bitter chastening began at once. The child born to Bathsheba died; Amnon, his oldest son, gratified his brutal lusts by outraging his sister Tamar; Absalom murdered Amnon for the outrage of Tamar, rebelled against David, almost won the throne and was himself destroyed; Sheba rebelled and almost destroyed the empire; and many indulgences are related in the family and kingdom of Solomon his son, which were cruel and sinful.

Elements of His Success

1. *Military Conquests.* David's was a military reign. He not only defended Israel, but subdued other nations. His foreign policy was one of conquest through which he subdued at least the five strong nations already mentioned. In his time such a policy would give great strength. It would win the loyalty of his own subjects and compel the respect of others.

2. *Wise Home Policies.* He acted with a wise consideration of the rights of his subjects and in every way sought to promote their happiness. He did not oppress his subjects with heavy taxes, nor despoil them of their possessions, nor seize them as soldiers against their will. He made vast internal improvements, built up the industrial interests, introduced ornamental arts, built storehouses and castles and made Jerusalem, the "city of David," the pride of the nation. In all of this these scriptures, 2 Sam. 8: 16-18, 15: 37, 16: 16, 20: 23-26, 1 Chron. 27: 33, show that he strengthened his kingdom by an organization that employed other strong men in forwarding his plans.

3. *Religious Zeal and Integrity.* David was a deeply religious man, and is especially distinguished from the other kings by his faith in God and his loyalty and gratitude to Him. He wrote many psalms of worship and praise. He brought up the Ark of the Covenant and placed it on Mount Zion, and gathered materials and stored riches with which the temple was later to be built. So outstanding was this religious element that all future

kings are eulogized or condemned with the statement, "He walked in the ways of David," or "He walked not in the ways of David." In his righteous reign, showing kindness to enemies as well as to friends, he furnishes the finest illustration of Jesus who is to reign in righteousness over all the world.

A Wonderful Life

In our attempt to understand the beautiful and varied life of David he may be studied: *as a shepherd*, where he laid a foundation for his great success; *as a servant at Saul's court*, where he became the object of bitter jealousies and suffered great indignities; *as a refugee from Saul*, when he refused to do wrong to one who was doing him great injustice; *as a friend*, so true that he would keep a covenant made with Jonathan, long after Jonathan was dead; *as a musician*, whose ability is witnessed both in the use of the harp and in the large body of psalms left us; *as a subject*, who was so true that he could remain loyal to Saul even after he was wronged by him and he himself had been anointed to be king in his stead; *as a ruler*, who ruled well his own people and formed friendly alliances with other kings; *as a military leader*, who organized most successful armies (1 Chron. 27: 1-5; 2 Sam. 2: 8, 9); *as a servant of God*, who properly organized the priests and Levites for worship and himself was known as "a man after God's own heart"; *as a type of Christ*, standing out as the most eminent among Old Testament characters.

His Last Days and Dying Instructions

The last days of David were made sad because of his own weakness. The memory of his guilt and disgrace had led him to withdraw more and more from the public life and, therefore, to neglect the duties of judge and ruler. His court became the scene of plotting concerning his successor, whose name he had apparently not announced. It was only by the valuable help of Nathan the prophet and Zadok, the priest, that he succeeded in having his wish in the matter.

The dying words of David have in them much that is prophetic of the Messiah. They point out to Solomon, his beloved son, who was to reign in his stead, the way

of all success and blessing. However, it contains what has been designated as "the greatest blot on David's character," his charge to Solomon to put to death Shimei and Joab. Such vindictiveness does not seem to comport with his spirit, manifested in the sparing of Saul in the days of his jealous hatred, and in his kindness to the house of Saul (2 Sam. 9). Nor does it comport with his patience formerly shown to Shimei (2 Sam. 16: 5-13). We cannot explain these charges of hatred upon any other ground than that he was an old man in his dotage. He is "no longer his manful self."

The Book of the Psalms

The book of the Psalms has been called the heart of the Bible, but its relation to the Old Testament is especially intimate. The Psalms interpret all the divine manifestations of Israel's history in the light of an inner experience and show forth a passion for truth and righteousness. The prevailing note in them is praise, though some are sad and plaintive while others are philosophical. While they cover a period of more than a thousand years reaching back to the time of Moses, nearly half of them were attributed to David. The whole collection was soon called the "Psalms of David" (Luke 20: 42).

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER XI

REIGN OF SOLOMON AND DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Account: 1 Kings 2: 13—12: 33,
2 Chronicles 1—10

Solomon and His Reign

- His Accession to the Throne.
- Ordinary Expectation.
- Solomon's Enthronement.
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- His Capacity for Rule.
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- His Policies.
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CHAPTER XI

REIGN OF SOLOMON AND DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Account: 1 Kings 2: 13—12: 33,
2 Chronicles 1—10

SOLOMON AND HIS REIGN

His Accession to the Throne

1. *Ordinary Expectation.* David being but the second king, and himself not a descendant of the former king, the law of succession had not been well established. According to the earliest traditions, the chieftain was tribal leader, but could not project his authority beyond his own life. The people were accustomed to call the most able men to rule among them. Two elements in deciding who should rule were that he should be nominated by the dying chief, or king, and that his choice should be accepted by the people. It seemed, however, to be considered natural for the oldest son to take the lead after the death of the father.

2. *Solomon's Enthronement.* Following this sentiment, Adonijah, the oldest son, sought to take possession of the throne, but David had promised Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah and mother of Solomon, that Solomon should reign in his stead. The plot of Adonijah was overcome by the timely interference of Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. They brought the matter to the attention of David, who immediately had Solomon, whose name means "peace," anointed, and led the people to acclaim him king. He was then given final instructions from David, and upon David's death he took the throne.

His Official Career

Three things of special interest stand out in the official career of Solomon.

1. *His Capacity for Rule.* It took but little time after he came to the throne to demonstrate that he was born to

rule. He took no action with reference to the men who had conspired against him until it was clear that they were not only disloyal at heart, but were planning treason. Then, with quick action, he slew three leaders who questioned his right to the throne and another who disobeyed his command. By these swift blows he put an end to all hints of rebellion. He was known far and wide for his culture and for his cleverness in literature, and these graces, added to his other qualities, made it clear that he was capable of leading the people.

2. *His Capacity for Organization.* He did much to perfect the organization David left. He divided the whole kingdom into twelve divisions, and required that each section care for the expenses of the government one month each year. He added other officers and created elaborate machinery for collecting the tax which was needed for the government. He also carried further the organization by treaties with other nations, part of which were secured by intermarriage.

3. *His Special Divine Blessing.* The source of all Solomon's ability and success is found in the story of his sacrifice at Gibeon. He signalized the beginning of his rule by calling a great assembly of the people to this ancient place of worship, which was a few miles north of Jerusalem. It was a time of great national joy and worship, during which God appeared to Solomon and offered him choice of gifts. Solomon sought wisdom for the noble purpose of rightly serving Israel as their king. This was the beginning of his success. God not only gave him the wisdom which he sought, but added also wealth and splendor.

His Policies

1. *Home Policy.* Solomon's home policy was one of absolutism. He became a despot and robbed the people of their freedom and put them under a yoke of oppression by imposing upon them heavy burdens of tax, that he might carry out his unholy plans for selfish indulgence. He so completely absorbed their time and energy in these plans that no time was left for the development of personal or private interests. The contrast between his palace and the humble mud and stone houses of his subjects was bound to bring discontent.

2. *Foreign Policy.* His foreign policy was one of diplomacy. He was altogether different from David. He was

not a war king and did not promote his kingdom by conquests, but by intermarriage and treaties with other peoples. By the establishment of commercial relations, and by the adoption of the customs and religions of other nations, he bound them to him in friendly alliance and thus promoted his kingdom.

3. *Religious Policy.* His religious policy was one of concentration. He built the temple and through the splendor of its worship tried to concentrate all worship upon Mount Moriah. This desire may also have contributed to his erection of altars to foreign deities. By erecting such altars and temples there, the different peoples would believe their gods dwelt there, and would fear to attack his capital lest they be found to fight against their gods. All of this was prompted by a desire for imperialism, but it led to his own religious deterioration and became his final undoing.

His Building Enterprises

1. *The Temple.* The greatest of all Solomon's building accomplishments was the temple. According to the most modern computation, the precious materials, such as gold, with which it was embellished, amounted to something like six hundred million dollars. The preparation for building it, the placing of the Ark in it and the great ceremony with which its completion was celebrated, all indicate the place of importance which it held. Its building was the most important single event during the United Kingdom. From this time on, Israel ceased to look back to Sinai and regarded Jerusalem as the dwelling place of Jehovah. Its priesthood and services became the support of the coming kings. The prophets proclaimed their messages from its sacred precincts and through it was nurtured the pure religion of Jehovah.

2. *Other Buildings.* Next to the temple in importance was the palace, which in size and time of construction surpassed that of the temple. This palace consisted of several halls, the chief of which were: the Forest of Lebanon, the Hall of Pillars, and the Hall of Judgment. Near the palace was the residence of the king himself, and his Egyptian queen's house, which would compare well with the royal palaces of her native land. Indeed, all Moriah and the ground about its base was covered with immense structures. He also built many great cities, the most

famous of which were Tadmor, or Palmyra, and Baalath, or Baalbec. The former, built on an oasis of the Syrian desert, seems to have been a sort of trade emporium for the traders of Syria and the Euphrates to exchange wares with the merchants of Egypt. The latter was near Lebanon and was chiefly notable for its temple of the sun, which was one of the finest edifices of Syria.

Nations Surrounding Israel

The life of any people is always influenced by the nations around them. During this period Israel had touch with many other nations. (1) Phoenicia. This commercial people, through Hiram of Tyre, one of its kings, supplied the cedar wood and the skilled laborers, which made possible the building of the temple. (2) Egypt. Solomon married a daughter of Pharaoh and carried on with Egypt an extensive commerce, and, for his wife's sake, no doubt, introduced the worship of Egyptian gods. (3) Assyria. This country, as well as Egypt, had lost much of her former power, and was not in position to antagonize Solomon. (4) Among other nations with which Solomon had dealings may be mentioned Sheba, thought to be in the most southern part of Arabia, Ophir and Tarshish, and, from the nature of articles purchased and the three years required for the voyage, he is thought to have sent trading vessels to India.

Solomon's Apostasy

While Solomon did not sink to the low level of some kings, his later years did not meet the expectancy of his youth. (1) He violated the law which Moses had given to govern kings (Deut. 17: 14-20). This he did in three ways: (a) by his dependence upon military equipment (1 Kings 10: 26); (b) by creating a great harem of a thousand wives, who contributed largely to his undoing; (c) by great wealth, which he could not gain without oppressing the people. (2) He worshiped other gods besides Jehovah. As an old man, "his wives turned away his heart after other gods." These violations weakened the kingdom and brought upon his house the judgment of God, and signs of discontent began to appear.

The Riddle of Solomon's Character

It is doubtful if any other Biblical characters have manifested such contradictory elements of character. His life

and conduct falls into two parts, one distinctly good and the other surprisingly bad.

1. *Evidences of the Good.* He began well and, for a time, ruled the people in righteousness. Early in life he manifested an earnest, conscientious and religious spirit. He was prayerful and sought above all else wisdom, that he might be able to rule well. He built the temple, and his prayers at its dedication were not only humble and fervent, but were expressive of the very highest loyalty to Jehovah as the one supreme God, and to all the high purposes of the divine will in Israel.

2. *Manifestations of the Bad.* In spite of his noble beginning, Solomon crushed the people with heavy burdens of taxation, trampled under foot the democratic ideals of the nation, and adopted the policy of oriental despots which tended to make free-born citizens slaves of the king. He lived a life of self-indulgence, and depended upon foreign alliances rather than upon Jehovah to save his nation. He married many strange wives and, through them, established in Israel the worship of strange gods (1 Kings 11: 1-8). On the whole, his reign destroyed what had been accomplished by David and of course proved disastrous. Although counted the wisest, he proved in many ways the most foolish, king that ever ruled over Israel.

Rise of the Prophets

By this time the prophetic office had been permanently established in Israel. Moses and Joshua were prophets of God and stood alone as His spokesmen to the people. From Joshua to Samuel no prophet is named, but with Samuel and the establishment of the monarchy the era of the great prophets begins and continues almost to the end of the Old Testament. Samuel as prophet was more important than Saul, the king, and great as was David, he was continually advised and warned and rebuked by prophets. They do not seem to have played quite so important a part in the life of Solomon, but one, Ahijah of Shiloh, appeared in the latter part of his career. The prophets of the period are Samuel, Gad (1 Sam. 22: 5, 2 Sam. 24: 11), Nathan (2 Sam. 7: 2-17; 12: 1-12, 1 Kings 1: 8-24), Iddo (2 Chron. 9: 29; 12: 15; 13: 22), and Ahijah (1 Kings 11: 29-39; 2 Chron. 9: 29). None of their teachings remain to us except the parable of Nathan and here and there a mere fragment.

THE WRITINGS OF SOLOMON

During the reign of Solomon, as in the former period, literary culture made great advancement. Like David, his father, Solomon possessed extraordinary literary gifts and, as a writer, exerted a large influence. Three books are attributed either to him or to the time of his reign.

The Book of Proverbs

Some of the proverbs were written by Solomon, some were collected by him from the sayings of others, and yet other proverbs were added by men of later times. But they are studied here because Solomon gave the proverb its highest perfection and permanently established its place in literature. As to their teaching, the proverbs emphasize the external religious life. They do not tell us so much about how to be saved, but do tell us how a saved man should conduct his life. They teach us how to practice religion and overcome the daily temptations. They express a belief in God and His rule over the universe, and seek to make His religion the controlling motive in life and conduct. They breathe a profound religious spirit and a lofty religious conception, but they put most stress on the doing of religion in all the relations of life.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

The purpose of this book is to show that if one should realize all the aims and hopes and aspirations of life, this would not satisfy the heart. It shows us a man who attained to all the best that could be gotten from human wisdom, from wealth, from worldly pleasure, and worldly honor, only to find that it was all "vanity and vexation of spirit." It portrays the result of successful worldliness and self-gratification in contrast with the outcome of the higher wisdom of a godly life. It teaches that man was not made for selfish achievement or gratification, but to fulfil some great plan of God through obedience and divine service.

The Song of Solomon

The book tells the story of a poor country girl who had a shepherd suitor whom she loved. She was brought to Jerusalem and, through flattery and promises of honor and luxury, was offered every possible inducement to

become the wife of the king. But she resisted every approach, constantly avowing her love for the shepherd lad of the hills, and was finally allowed to return to her home and lover. It is a story of faithful love and shows forth the purity and constancy of a woman's love and devotion to her ideals. If its teachings were properly observed, they would cast out of human society many monstrous practices, would purify the relation of the sexes and save us from the ruin of the social sin.

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Evidences of National Decay

From the brief Biblical narratives it is evident that the nation began to disintegrate before the death of Solomon. Among the more apparent signs of decay were several revolts by Hadad, the Edomite, who threw off the Hebrew yoke and ruled a part of Edom independently; by Adad, the Midianite, who defied the authority of Solomon; and by Rezon, the Aramean, who revolted and became master of Damascus, around which grew up an important kingdom. Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, who was an officer of Solomon at Jerusalem, led a rebellion and, while it was unsuccessful, it showed the existence of a deep-seated discontent in Jerusalem itself. It is significant that the prophet, Ahijah of Shiloh, encouraged Jeroboam by telling him that, on account of the idolatry fostered by Solomon, ten tribes would be removed from Solomon's son and committed to him. This indicated that he and other leaders disapproved Solomon's policies as untrue to Jehovah, and that the prophets saw that disunion alone would preserve the liberties and pure religion of Israel.

Causes of the Division

1. *Contributory Causes.* Several causes helped to bring about the division of the kingdom. The differences between the northern and southern territories tended to keep alive an old jealousy that had existed since the time of the Judges. Under the reign of Solomon, the faithfulness of the people to Jehovah was weakened through the idolatrous worship of other gods. This gave place for the manifestation of the old jealousy. Also, Solomon put upon the people heavy burdens of taxation and of forced labor, which

were fast reducing them to serfdom. This inflamed the northern tribes, who counted it disloyalty to God to give up their liberty. Once more, Ahijah, the prophet, had told Jeroboam, a valiant Ephraimite officer of Solomon, that at Solomon's death he should become the head of ten of the tribes (1 Kings 11: 29-39), and now he stirred up these tribes to revolt.

2. *Final and Immediate Cause.* Rehoboam went to Shechem to be accepted as king by the ten tribes. They demanded that he should relieve them of the heavy burdens laid upon them by Solomon. Rejecting the counsel of the older and more experienced men and heeding the unwise advice of the young men, he answered them with a threat of even severer burdens. Incensed by this foolish threat, the ten tribes revolted and enthroned Jeroboam as their king. Thus was the division of the empire accomplished and much that had been wrought by the three preceding kings was undone.

Comparison of the Two Kingdoms

1. *Israel, the Northern Kingdom.* Israel was a pioneering, progressive, experimenting nation, with a larger and more fertile country, three times as many people and a much better military equipment than Judah. Ramah, Bethel and Gilgal with their schools of the prophets, Shechem with its wealth of memories, and Shiloh, the early home of the tabernacle, were all in Israel's borders. The country was also the scene of greatest prophetic activity, and her cause was just, but the kings were inferior and wicked, not a single one of the nineteen being godly. They established idolatrous and abominable worship, and this idolatry counterbalanced all material advantages.

2. *Judah, the Southern Kingdom.* Judah was a conservative nation, far superior to Israel from a spiritual point of view. She possessed the religious capital of the nation with the temple as a center of Jehovah worship. True, she had only one-third as many people, one-fifth as much territory, was less fertile, and had inferior military equipment; but her superior spiritual power and superior line of kings made her government last one hundred and thirty five years longer than that of the northern kingdom.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER XII

THE TWO KINGDOMS TO THE FALL OF ISRAEL

Scripture Account: 1 Kings 12: 21—2 Kings 25,
2 Chronicles 11—29

Two General Matters

- Sources of Information.
 - The Books of Kings.
 - The Books of Chronicles.
- Relation of the Two Kingdoms and Effects of the Division.
- Their Relation.
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Events in the History of the Two Kingdoms

- Principal Events in the History of Judah.
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 - Things Hopeful.
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- Activity of the Prophets.
- Four Periods in Israel's History.
- Conquest of Israel by the Assyrians.
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 - The Samaritans.
- Israel's Contribution to the World.

The Prophets of the Period

- Non-Writing Prophets.
 - Elijah.
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- Study of the Prophets.
 - Use of the term Prophet.
 - Study of Prophecy in General.
 - Predictive Prophecy.
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 - Amos and His Message.
 - Hosea and His Message.
 - Joel and His Message.
 - Jonah and His Message.

CHAPTER XII

THE TWO KINGDOMS TO THE FALL OF ISRAEL

Scripture Account: 1 Kings 12: 21—2 Kings 25,
2 Chronicles 11—29

TWO GENERAL MATTERS

Sources of Information

Much may be learned elsewhere concerning this period, especially in the discourses of the prophets, but the books of Kings and Chronicles are the principal sources of information, and while they contain much of the history of other periods they should probably be studied here.

1. *The Books of Kings.* The matters recorded in these books, together with the way in which the writer passes judgment upon the several kings as good or bad, make it clear that his concern is only to show religious conditions. Everywhere he presents a conflict between faith and unbelief, between the worship of Jehovah and the worship of Baal. Israel yields to evil and is cut off, while Judah repents and is preserved and becomes the medium through which Jesus should come. This religious purpose is further emphasized by the large place given to the biographies of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

2. *The Books of Chronicles.* These take us back to Adam and review the whole story, bringing us down to the edict of Cyrus, permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem. The religious purpose of the books is shown in the conspicuous place given to God's care of His people and to His purpose to save them; to the building of the temple and the religious institutions and practices centered in it, and to the kings who served God and destroyed idols. It is further shown in their following the Messianic line through Judah and David, instead of Israel, and in the predominance of the priestly

element in these books instead of the prophetic element found in the earlier historical books. Even the narration aims to teach that both individuals and nations must take God into account.

Relation of the Two Kingdoms and Effects of the Division

1. *Their Relation.* For about sixty years, there was almost constant war between them, Judah hoping to regain control of the ten tribes. Then through inter-marriage between the families of Ahab, King of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, a period of close alliance was created, but when Jehu was enthroned in Israel, there was a fresh outbreak of hatred. He destroyed the house of Ahab and forever shattered the alliance between the two nations.

2. *Result of the Division.* Through the long-drawn-out wars, the two kingdoms grew gradually weaker until, in 722 B.C., the northern kingdom was overcome by the Assyrians and in 587 Judah was carried captive by the Babylonians. The story of the political ruin that befell them unfolds to us the character and demands of Jehovah and the great ethical and spiritual principles upon which the nations rested. They suffered great afflictions and were the victims of much prejudice and greed, and at last became the champions of ethical righteousness. They lost their national and political ambitions, but found the eternal God and spiritual joys far more satisfying than all material honors and success.

EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

Principal Events in the History of Judah

The principal events in the history of Judah from the division of the kingdom to the captivity of Israel are: (1) The foolish answer of Rehoboam to the ten tribes which led to the revolt, and the continual enmity of the northern and southern kingdoms which followed. (2) The invasion of Judah five years after the death of Solomon, by Shishak of Egypt, who greatly weakened the nation. (3) The reign of Jehoshaphat, whose judicial, military, and educational or religious reforms introduce a new and good day in Judah, and whose unhappy

alliance with Ahab led his son, who succeeded him as king, to introduce idolatry into Judah with all the evil of the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. (4) The prosperous reign of Uzziah, who was contemporary with Jeroboam II of Israel, and the consequent material lapses. (5) The apostasy under Ahaz, who encouraged Baal worship and practiced great cruelty even on the members of his own family. The prophet Isaiah (chs. 7—9) appeals to Ahaz and to the people to return to Jehovah. Micah also prophesied during this time.

Principal Events in the History of Israel

The following events, though not put down in the order of their occurrence, are the most important in Israel's history.

1. *Things Hopeful.* Omri moved the capitol to Samaria, and by his vigorous reign introduced a new epoch and raised the northern kingdom to a new position of power. Jehu, who seems to have been led along by the prophets and was aided by a series of disasters, instituted some reforms that swept Baal worship from the land. Jeroboam II extended the territory, revived commerce and developed the national resources until the nation resembled that under David and Solomon.

2. *Things Wicked.* At the very first, Israel attempted to counteract the temple worship at Jerusalem by establishing at Dan and Bethel royal sanctuaries of idol worship. This was followed later by the wicked reign of Ahab, who introduced Baal worship in Israel and aroused much resentment among the people by adopting the wicked practices of Idolatry.

3. *Activity of the Prophets.* This is indicated in the work of Amos, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, and of Isaiah and Micah. It is also seen in the place given (1 Kings 17—2 Kings 13) to the work of Elijah and Elisha. Failure to hear these prophets led to a weakening of the nation and its final conquest by the Assyrians. This was the end of the nation as such.

Four Periods in Israel's History

Israel's religious history has four well-defined periods. (1) Period of flourishing idolatry. This period lasted about a half century and saw the rule of five kings, Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah and Zimri. There was

a policy of half worldliness and half religion that ruined the nation. (2) Period of the triumph of idolatry. Four kings, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram, reigned and idolatry was regnant, and especially through Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, whose name, now for nearly three thousand years, has stood for all that is hateful and bad in women. (3) Period of checked idolatry. This period was as long as both of the previous periods and lasted over one hundred years. It was the time of the greatest prosperity of the northern kingdom. It began with Jehu and his campaign of destruction of Baal worship, and continued through the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II and Zechariah. (4) Period ending in ruin. This period lasted fifty years. The kings, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea, were mere puppets of Assyria and were finally conquered by that country. Thus having been untrue to Jehovah, idolatry was punished and Israel lost her national identity.

Conquest of Israel by the Assyrians

1. *The Conquest.* There were four invasions or threatened invasions. (1) By Shalmaneser II, to whom Jehu paid tribute. This invasion is mentioned only in the monuments. (2) By Tiglathpileser, whose Babylonian name was Pul, 2 Kings 15: 19, 20. (3) By Tiglathpileser IV, 2 Kings 15: 29. (4) By Shalmaneser IV, who invaded Israel because Hoshea rebelled and refused to pay tribute. During the siege of Samaria, Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser, and upon conquering Israel, carried into exile 27,290 of the more prominent men and replaced them with colonists from Assyria. This ended the independence of the northern kingdom.

2. *The Samaritans.* The Hebrews married among their newly imported Assyrian neighbors and soon, through this union a new race called Samaritans was produced. Under the protection of Assyria, they prospered, while Judah in the south was often nearly crushed by her enemies. They have persisted through all the ages, a few still living at the ancient city of Shechem. They were bitterly hated by the southern kingdom, whose people would have nothing to do with them, even in Christ's time (John 4: 9).

Israel's Contribution to the World

The northern kingdom was greater and far more aggressive than Judah, both in its good and bad tendencies. The two hundred years of its separate existence was one of the most important periods in the religious history of the race. Israel had a freer and more democratic atmosphere than that found in the South. The nation furnished great social, political and religious problems that called forth some of the greatest Hebrew prophets. The work and teachings of these prophets added much to the faith of mankind. We have such commanding personalities as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, and Jonah. Through it all, we are impressed that the worship of other gods was the cause of their downfall. Such moral and religious and social disorders and abuses developed as convinced the world of the justice of the severe judgment which was visited upon them and warned it against turning away from Jehovah.

THE PROPHETS

Non-Writing Prophets

The wicked reign of Ahab, whose wife, Jezebel, introduced into Israel all the evils of Baal worship, brought on a conflict between the religious and political parties. This crisis called forth Elijah and Elisha, the two greatest non-writing prophets, who carried on a bold and fearless struggle against false worship, and finally succeeded in driving it out of Israel and in overthrowing the wicked dynasty which introduced it. The most important events of the inspiring career of these two non-writing prophets may be put down as follows.

1. *Elijah*. Living in the midst of corruption and constantly opposed and persecuted, Elijah was of necessity a man of stern and rigid character. He was noted for: (1) His prophecy of a famine and his support by the ravens (1 Kings 17: 1-7); (2) His miracles of increasing the widow's meal and oil and of raising the widow's son (1 Kings 17: 8-24); (3) His meeting with Ahab, resulting in a contest with 850 false prophets whom he destroyed, and in sending rain upon the land (1 Kings ch. 18); (4) His flight from Jezebel, the divine revelations of God to him on Mount Horeb, and the call of Elisha (1

Kings ch. 19); (5) His announcement of the doom of Ahab for his sin against Naboth (1 Kings 21: 17-29); (6) His prediction of Ahaziah's death and the death of the men sent against him by Ahaziah (2 Kings 1: 1-18); (7) His translation (2 Kings 2: 1-12).

2. *Elisha*. Elisha was less rugged and more lovable than Elijah, but no less powerful. His ministry was notable because of the large element of the miraculous in it. (1) He divided the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 2: 14). (2) He healed the waters of Jericho (2 Kings 2: 19-22). (3) Children were destroyed who mocked him (2 Kings 2: 23-25). (4) He performed six miracles during the reign of Jehoram (2 Kings 4: 1-6: 7). These are: increasing the widow's oil, raising from the dead the son of the Shunammite, destroying the poison in their pottage, feeding one hundred men with twenty barley loaves, curing the leprosy of Naaman and smiting his servant, Gehazi, and making the ax swim. (5) He struck the army of Benhadad with blindness (2 Kings 6: 8-23). (6) He prophesied the death of Benhadad and the destruction of the cities of Israel by Hazael (2 Kings 8: 7-15). (7) He prophesied that King Jehoash would overthrow Syria, and then he died (2 Kings 13: 14-21).

Study of the Prophets

1. *Use of the Term Prophet*. The term prophet is used to represent a man in three capacities. (1) One employed in public discourse very much as a preacher of today. This is by far the most common use of the term. (2) One who performed the function of a scribe. As such, the prophets copied and wrote large portions of the Old Testament. (3) One who could foretell future events. In this capacity he is called a seer, but only a small portion of the prophetic messages is of this predictive type.

2. *Study of Prophecy in General*. The prophet was first of all a Jewish patriot and revivalist filled with the Spirit of God, and zeal for Israel. He dealt primarily with the moral and religious conditions of his own people and tried to correct existing evils, to promote worthy enterprises and to hearten and help those in distress and need. His denunciations, warnings and exhortations are not abstract principles, but are local and for

Israel. As far as possible they are to be interpreted in the literal and natural meaning of the words and not allegorically. Many passages show that the fulfilment is generally literal.

3. *Predictive Prophecy.* The predictive element of prophecy must be interpreted with two things in view: (1) a nearby or local fulfilment, such as of the dispersion and restoration; (2) a far-off and greater fulfilment of which the first is only the forerunner, such as the advent of the Messiah and His glorious reign over the whole earth. A prophecy might have its first or nearby fulfilment in the joy of the period of the restoration of the Jews and its far-off and higher fulfilment in the complete restoration of all things in Christ.

Writing Prophets

Here, for the first time, we come upon the messages of those prophets whose discourses are preserved for us in the Bible. Four such messages belong here, those of Amos, Hosea, Joel and Jonah. Each of them recognized the existence of moral and religious corruption. They taught Israel that their defeat by the Assyrians was due to their sins and not to any lack of interest or to weakness of Jehovah, their God. They emphasized different characteristics of God, such as justice or love, according as they saw the needs of the people.

1. *Amos and His Message.* Amos was not of the schools of the prophets, but was called out of Judah where he acted as a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees, and was sent as a prophet to Israel, the northern kingdom. He preached to a people who robbed and oppressed the poor; who practiced graft and bribery and dishonesty in trading; who corrupted the courts and practiced shameful immoralities, and whose women had lost all human feeling. He foretold the captivity and also the glory of the Messianic kingdom. He condemned the sins of the people and taught that a life of righteousness and obedience alone would avert from them the curse of Jehovah. His bold preaching against Israel aroused Amaziah, the leading priest of their idol worship, who seemed to accuse him of preaching as a mere trade (7: 10-16) and caused him to be expelled from the country.

2. *Hosea and His Message.* His style, although abrupt and uneven, is nevertheless poetic and figurative. His

unfaithful wife deserted him and went after other men. He loved her and, at great cost, restored her, and in that experience caught a vision of how the wounded love of God would restore sinful Israel, if only Israel would repent. It was a time of great wickedness and he taught that they were not only violating divine law, but were insulting divine love. He, therefore, preached sincere repentance as a necessary condition of forgiveness and restoration. He saw that the chief end of all life is found in the peace and happiness that come through harmony and communion with God. He also proclaimed the Messianic King and the blessings of His time (1: 11; 3: 5).

3. *Joel and His Message.* He seems to have prophesied in Judah, and the time is thought to have been during the reign of Joash, king of Israel, and Amaziah, king of Judah. The occasion of the prophecy was four successive plagues sent upon the people. He declared that these calamities were the result of their sins and preached on the terrible judgments of God which were to come upon them because of their sins. By stressing the rewards of the righteous as well as the punishment of the wicked, he appealed to both the hopes and fears of men. The chief value of the book is its optimism. There was victory ahead. The righteous would finally attain to a glorious triumph. The distinctive prophecy (2: 28-32), was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 16-21).

4. *Jonah and His Message.* This book differs from all other books of prophecy in being more a "history of prophecy than prophecy itself." But it is not simply historical. It is not given to inform us concerning the prophet Jonah, but to teach great prophetic truth. The story compares well with those of Elijah and Elisha. It is unfortunate that its miraculous element has been allowed to turn our thoughts away from the great moral and spiritual lessons which it was intended to teach. It was intended to show the Jews that in their selfishness they had forgotten that God's love includes all the world and that He is anxious for all men to repent and turn to Him and be saved. To the Christian it reveals the universality of the plan of redemption. It is a call to foreign missions, showing how those who know of the divine love and grace are commissioned to carry the message of it to all others.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER XIII

JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

Scripture Account: 2 Chronicles 30: 1—36: 16

The Kingdom of Judah

- Judah and David's Influence.
- Judah's Advantage over Israel.
 - Her Seclusion and Non-fertility of Soil.
 - Her Unity and Religion.
- Wealth, Luxury and Intellectual Culture.
 - Wealth and Luxury.
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- Crimes and Condemnation of Judah's Leaders.
 - Wrongs Affecting Social Life.
 - Religious Wrongs.
- Principal Events of the Period.
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CHAPTER XIII

JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

Scripture Account: 2 Chronicles 30: 1—36: 16

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

Judah and David's Influence

The history of Judah illustrates the lasting influence of one great man. David had furnished an ideal reign and all the prophetic hopes and instincts of the nation gathered about him and his line. Judah lasted 135 years after the fall of Israel, and it is noteworthy that through her entire history of more than 350 years, she was ruled by nineteen kings and one queen, all of them belonging to the dynasty of David. She possessed all the prestige and influence of David's name and enjoyed all the benefits of the cumulative power that comes from an uninterrupted succession of kings.

Judah's Advantage Over Israel

Judah had several advantages over Israel. These enabled Judah to survive 135 years after the destruction of Israel. They may be summed up as follows:

1. *Her Seclusion and Non-fertility of Soil.* The territory was so secluded that foreign invaders could hardly reach it. Then, too, it was for the most part poor and rocky and yielded only enough for a bare subsistence, and that only as a result of the most arduous labor. This developed hardy, earnest and courageous men, who loved her rocky hills and were slow to give up their customs and religion. Moreover, the mass of the people were free from the enervating influence of wealth.

2. *Her Unity and Religion.* Judah had a perfect unity of population and of interests. She was bound together by the closest national bonds and formed a social unit that was little torn by invasions. This bond of national union was always strengthened by her religion. But the centralization of worship in the temple at Jerusalem, with



all its splendid equipment and elaborate services, commanded the reverence and homage of all the people of Judah, and was a potent factor for union. Moreover, it tended to prevent her people from going into idolatry and bringing upon themselves the wrath of Jehovah.

Wealth, Luxury and Intellectual Culture

1. *Wealth and Luxury.* The following Scriptures: Amos 5: 11; Jer. 22: 14; Isa. 3: 18-23; 5: 11-12; 21: 7 will indicate some of the things which they possessed. The masses of the people were very poor, but the reigning and influential classes lived in luxury and indulged in all the follies of the idle rich and showed the usual heartlessness toward the poor. There were houses "of hewn stone," "winter houses," "summer houses," "houses of ivory," "beds of ivory," and luxurious "couches." They anointed themselves with "chief ointments" at the time for feasts. They were wholly given over to selfish and worldly living. The prophets pronounced fearful judgments upon the sinful rich.

2. *Intellectual Culture.* Such practices as that of witchcraft indicate a certain low state of intelligence, but there were also some traces of intellectual culture. Isaiah speaks of "the counsellor and the cunning artificer and eloquent orator," as if there were a regular class of them. Amos speaks of "the seven stars and Orion," as if the people were familiar with them. The very body of fine literature that has come down to us from that time indicates a high state of intellectual development.

Crimes and Condemnation of Judah's Leaders

For the most part the prophets directed their warnings and denunciations against men of culture, wealth and position, against the pillars of society and the champions of religion. The following sins were pointed out:

1. *Wrongs Affecting the Social Life.* The evils of land monopoly were turning aside the rewards of labor and the common gifts of nature. Selfish luxury and debauchery were controlling the political and economic life of the people. The sense of justice and mercy had been so perverted that crime and dishonesty passed for virtue. They were wise in their own eyes and were renowned for mixing drinks, for corrupting tribunals and for wronging the poor and innocent. Even women, especially of the

ruling classes, had lost all sense of pity and love and were consumed with an ambition to make a show of beauty.

2. *Religious Wrongs.* First of all, there was a growing tendency to skepticism. Contrary to all their former life they were openly breaking the divine law and foolishly defying Jehovah to punish them. They were putting their confidence in magic and divination and were relying on their strong treasures and armies instead of looking to Jehovah for help. A nation with so much evil in both its national and religious affairs is certain to come to grief, and the story of its destruction is described in Isaiah, chapters, 5, 9, 10, etc.

Principal Events of the Period

The principal events of this period may be grouped under three heads.

1. *Promising Events.* Under this head come the reforms of Hezekiah, who attempted to restore the whole Mosaic order. He overthrew false worship and showed himself the noblest and purest prince that had sat upon the throne since David. He gave Judah a new lease on life. Here also belongs the good reign of Josiah, who destroyed the altars of idolatry, repaired the temple and caused the book of the law to be read, all of which resulted in a very thorough-going revival of true worship. He ranks with Hezekiah as a reformer, and Jeremiah was to him, at least in some measure, what Isaiah had been to Hezekiah. Unfortunately, he interfered in a war between Egypt and Assyria, and lost his life. His death greatly grieved Jeremiah, since it sounded the death knell of the hopes of Judah.

2. *Evil Conditions.* Much of Judah's evil life has already been discussed, but here we should put down such matters as the evil reign of Manasseh, who sought to destroy all true worship of Jehovah and established idolatrous worship in its stead. He seems to have adopted and fostered every kind of idolatry, Baal worship, Moloch worship, Chaldean star worship and witchcraft, and engaged in that fierce persecution which filled all Jerusalem with blood. Under these influences, the people sank into a wickedness that was declared to have been worse than that of the original inhabitants of Canaan, whom Israel had driven out.

3. *Enemy Invasions and Judah's Downfall.* Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah during the reign of Hezekiah and at first humiliated him, but later, Sennacherib was destroyed by divine intervention and Jerusalem was saved. Other conflicts arose between Judah and her enemies, and having deserted Jehovah as her God and support, she was left to her own strength. Then resulted the complete overthrow of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people.

Great Religious Declines and Revivals

1. *Religious Declines.* Four religious declines mark the history of Judah. (1) During the reign of Rehoboam, under whom the worship of Jehovah fell off, heathen altars were erected and gross immoralities spread everywhere. (2) A decline under the reign of Jehoram, which continued until the reign of Ahaz, when it reached the lowest possible spiritual state. (3) Under Manasseh, who reared images to Baal, defiled the temple and overthrew the good work of his father, Hezekiah. (4) A final decline that forever destroyed the glory of Judah and led to her captivity in Babylon.

2. *Religious Revivals.* Judah's history also shows three revivals of religious interest. (1) Under the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat, the latter of whom reorganized the worship of Jehovah and provided religious instruction for the people. (2) Under Hezekiah, who, influenced by the prophets, introduced sweeping social and religious changes. (3) Under the influence of Josiah, whose piety began to manifest itself at the age of sixteen. He began his reforms at the age of twenty, and spent six years in hewing down the altars and images of idolatry. The temple was repaired, the law was found and enjoined anew upon the people and the Passover was celebrated.

3. *Significance of these Revivals.* The quick collapse that followed each of these efforts toward a return to the true worship of Jehovah, indicates that they were only outward reformations and not the true enkindlings of spiritual life that mark a real revival. Many people did, no doubt, turn in truth to God, but the rapidity with which each effort was followed by a return to deeper depths of immorality, gives evidence of the abounding wickedness of the period and of the superficiality of the revivals.

Contemporary Nations

During this period, Judah was influenced by Egypt, Assyria, Syria, Babylonia, Media, Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece and Rome. The student should become acquainted with the leading events in the history of these nations during this period. This is especially necessary in the matter of such persons as Shishak and Sabaco of Egypt, who had to do with kings, Rehoboam and Hoshea; Sennacherib, king of Syria, who harassed king Hezekiah; Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who carried Manasseh into captivity; and Nebuchadrezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem.

THE PROPHETS**False Prophets**

1. *The Prophets Themselves.* Since there were true prophets, it was to be expected that there should arise false prophets and that they would meet with favor among those who objected to the teachings of the true prophets. It was natural that false leaders should become a source of constant trouble among a people whose history is primarily religious. Among the false prophets that were active, were: an old prophet of Bethel (1 Kings 13: 11); 400 prophets with a lying spirit (1 Kings 22: 6-8, 22, 23); 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18: 19, 22, 40); 400 prophets of Asherah (1 Kings 18: 19). A study of these will show that some are idolatrous prophets and others perverted worshipers of Jehovah, who did not really prophesy at all. Some were, no doubt, deliberate deceivers of the people, while others were perhaps self-deceived.

2. *Their Influence.* These false prophets undermined the influence of the true prophets and destroyed the people's confidence in their messages, and when the voice of the true messengers of God was no longer heeded, the nation soon came to ruin. Isaiah talks about the prophet that teaches lies (Isa. 9: 15). Jeremiah talks of the prophets of lies, who prophesy, not having been sent of Jehovah (Jer. 14: 13-15; 23: 21, 22). Micah tells of the prophets who make the people err (Micah 3: 5). Jeremiah was openly opposed by a false prophet, named Hananiah (Jer. 28). These false prophets were responsible

for the ruin of Judah, and they teach us the danger of giving religious sanction to a wicked course.

Problems of the Prophets

1. *The Anti-prophetic Party.* Isaiah had prophesied the downfall of Assyria and the establishment of a peaceful reign under a king of the Davidic line, but this ideal Messianic King had not come, Assyria had not been destroyed and the condition of Judah had not been changed. The popular opinion was that the prosperity of Assyria indicated that her gods had won, and that it was well for Israel to worship those gods. This resulted in a strong anti-prophetic party, headed by the king, which not only set aside the prophetic party, but persecuted it and set up foreign worship.

2. *The Prophets' Objection to Idolatry.* The prophetic party believed that idolatry would ruin the nation and engaged in ceaseless combat against it. They objected to it on political, social and religious grounds. They were genuine patriots and thought that this worship would destroy their distinctness, based upon their world mission, and make them an inferior nation. They objected to the lustfulness, self-indulgence, immorality and social injustice to which idolatry led. To them idolatry meant, and rightly so, a denial that Jehovah was the only true God. Their fight along these lines brought them sore sufferings and probably death in some cases.

Teachings of the Prophets

The sermons of the prophets touch upon many matters both national and personal, and teach the following great religious truths: (1) That Jehovah is a moral being; holy, just, wise and good. (2) That Jehovah was the God, not only of Judah and of Israel, but of all nations. (3) That no man, no set of men, and no nation, can thwart the plans of God. (4) That God's judgments, though sometimes delayed, were certain to overtake the sinful. (5) That religion was not separate from life, but the very central factor of it, that religion and ethics are so blended that "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before his God," is shown to be man's whole duty. (6) That religion is a personal, spiritual relation between God and man. This is especially the con-

tribution of Jeremiah. It lays the foundation for all true faith and is a basal principle of our Christianity.

Prophetic Books of This Period

Six prophets, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk belong here. No doubt Isaiah and Micah did part of their service during the former period, and Jeremiah performed part of his service in the next. But they are studied here because this is the time of their greatest activity.

1. *Isaiah and His Message.* Of all the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah was the most renowned. He seems to have spent most of his life at Jerusalem as a sort of court preacher or chaplain to the king. He had a powerful intellect, great integrity and remarkable force of character, and spoke for all nations and for all times. He emphasized the holiness and majesty of God, the corruption of those about him, the certainty of awful judgment upon the wicked. He also believed that a remnant would be saved as the seed of a new Israel. With these truths burning in his soul, he pressed the battle of righteousness into every sphere of life and tried to make commerce and politics, as well as religious worship, so pure that it could all become a service acceptable to God.

2. *Micah and His Message.* Micah sympathized deeply with the common people and became the people's advocate and defender as well as their accuser. He prophesied to both Israel and Judah and clearly set forth their wickedness, their punishment and the coming of Christ. As compared with Isaiah, he was a simple countryman, while Isaiah was a city prophet of high social standing and a counselor of kings. The six great truths of his prophecy are found in 1: 6; 4: 1-10; 5: 2; 7: 11-17. The last is his greatest prophecy and was accepted as final in the announcement to Herod (Matt. 2: 4-9).

3. *Jeremiah and His Message.* Jeremiah was of a sensitive nature, mild and timid and inclined to melancholy, but in spite of this, he was bold and courageous in declaring the message of God even when it was unpopular and subjected him to hatred and the suffering of wrong. He was so pained over the disobedience and apostasy of his people and by the calamity which he

foresaw coming upon them, that he has been called the weeping prophet. He made two contributions to the truth as understood at that time. (1) The spirituality of religion. He saw the coming overthrow of their national and formal religion and realized that, to survive that crisis, religion must become individual and spiritual. (2) Personal responsibility (31: 29, 30). If religion is to be a spiritual condition of the individual, the doctrine of personal responsibility was a logical necessity. These two teachings constitute a great forward step.

4. *Zephaniah and His Message.* The theme of the prophet is "The great day of the Lord," and his prophecy seems to be based upon the ravages of the Scythians, whom the nations had come to fear and whom Egypt had bribed. It pointed to Jehovah's judgments that are to come upon all nations, including Jerusalem and Judah. He also saw a time when converts to Jehovah would be made in all the world and would worship God, "every one from his place."

5. *Nahum and His Message.* The theme of the book is the approaching fall of Nineveh. It is an exultation over the distress of a cruel foe, and was intended to comfort his own people with the knowledge that Assyria would soon fall and trouble them no more. He is silent concerning the sins of Judah, but emphasizes divine vengeance and divine mercy as the twofold manifestation of divine holiness (1: 1-3). One results in the destruction of the wicked (1: 2), the other in the salvation of the righteous (1: 15; 2: 2). We are reminded of God's sovereignty over the world and of the absolute necessity of personal and civic righteousness.

6. *Habakkuk and His Message.* Habakkuk does not teach as do other prophets. He is perplexed about the success of other and wicked nations. He addresses God, and questions the justice, if not the very reality, of divine providence. He wonders how God could use the wicked Chaldeans (Barbarians) to execute His purposes. He wonders if the righteousness of God can be vindicated before the people so long as the righteous suffer and the wicked seem to triumph.



PERIOD FIVE

THE HEBREW PROVINCE

Time—From the captivity of Judah in Babylon to the birth of Christ.

CHAPTER XIV. The Captivity of Judah.

CHAPTER XV. The Restoration of Judah.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER XIV

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Scripture Account: 2 Chronicles 36: 17-23; Obadiah,
Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Three Important Matters

- The General Situation.
- The Ten Tribes Lost.
- Babylonian Empire.
 - Her Condition.
 - Her Fall.

Captivity of Judah

- Cause of the Captivity.
- Captivity Itself.
- Length of the Captivity.
- Fugitives in Egypt.
- Exiles in Babylon.
 - Their Home and Occupation.
 - Their Government and Religion.
- Benefits of the Captivity.

Prophets of the Period

- Optimism of the Prophets.
- Prophetic Messages.
 - Obadiah and His Message.
 - The Book of Lamentations.
 - Ezekiel and His Message.
 - Daniel and His Message.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Scripture Account: 2 Chronicles 36: 17-23, Obadiah, Lamentations, Daniel, Ezekiel.

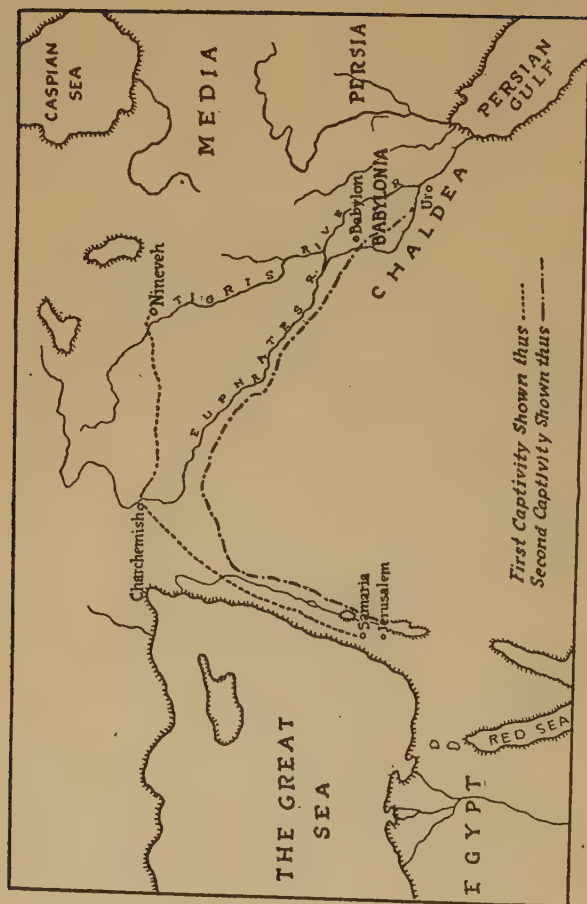
THREE IMPORTANT MATTERS

The General Situation

We have now traced the fortunes of the chosen people through a period of fifteen hundred years since Abraham. We saw their deliverance out of Egypt and their entrance into Canaan, their glorious national life, their division, and the disappearance of the ten tribes. Now we are to see Judah broken up, Jerusalem in ruins, her king and leaders in captivity and the end of the glory of national independence. Henceforth, except for a brief time, Judah is ruled by a foreign power and superstition, ignorance, idolatry and gross immorality are everywhere. But the experiment of human redemption had not failed, nor had the knowledge of God perished from the earth. The prophets saw a new vision of the coming of Christ and spoke of the world-wide spiritual reign which He would set up. It began to appear that the old Jewish Theocracy was temporary and external and preparatory to the spiritual work of the future.

The Ten Tribes Lost

After the fall of Samaria, we hear but little of the ten tribes. Some of them were carried into captivity, others mingled with the races about them and lost their identity. No doubt, some of them, as individuals, were faithful to the worship of Jehovah and may have found their way back to Palestine under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was different with Judah, who all the time kept true to her ideals and looked for the return that had been prophesied. This hope was realized through the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, following the decree of Cyrus.



Babylonian Empire

1. *Her Condition.* We are now within the successful reign of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and one of the greatest monarchs of ancient times. He made war upon the Phœnicians, Egyptians and Jews and extended his kingdom westward to the Mediterranean Sea. It was a country of splendid culture and was noted for its astronomers, architects and great merchants. Astrology was a part of their religion, and when Alexander conquered Babylon in 331 B.C., he found an unbroken series of astronomical calculations covering 1903 years. They built great structures, worked in metals, cut gems, carried on great commerce, and made delicate fabrics upon looms. Nebuchadrezzar built magnificent temples and palaces and wonderful hanging gardens. Such was the culture and learning of the people to whom Judah now became subject.

2. *Her Fall.* As the prophets watched the changing fortunes of the nations, they saw the coming doom of their oppressors and predicted the overthrow of Babylon. They describe the wars against it, but count the fall of the country as the punishment of God for its rule of tyranny. They dwell upon the greatness of the calamity, but, as will be seen from Isaiah, chapters 13, 14, 21, and Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51, they manifest a spirit of bitterness and revenge. In B.C. 539, Cyrus advanced upon Babylon and easily overcame it. Her method of defense stirred Isaiah to an expression of bitter sarcasm, but her fall ended the Semitic rule which had controlled the Asiatic world for nearly two thousand years.

CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

Cause of the Captivity

As has already been seen the sin and degradation of the people was the primary cause both of the Assyrian and the Babylonian captivities. The people rejected God, and in spite of warnings and pleadings by the prophets, set up institutions of false worship and indulged in the basest of practices. God became offended and ceased to interfere in their behalf when they were in hours of crisis. Then, too, they engaged in certain rebellions

against the kings of Assyria and Babylon, against Shalmaneser and Nebuchadrezzar. All these conditions led to the national overthrow.

The Captivity Itself

The captivity of Judah was accomplished by three successive invasions of the Babylonians, covering a period of twenty years. (1) In 607 B.C., at which time Daniel and his friends, along with others, were carried into captivity (2 Kings 24: 1; Jer. 25: 1; Dan. 1: 1-7). (2) In 597 B.C., at which time King Jehoiakim, the skilled workmen of Jerusalem and ten thousand of the people were carried captive into Babylon. Among these were Ezekiel and one of the ancestors of Mordecai, the cousin of Esther (2 Kings 24: 10-16; Ezek. 1: 1, 2; Esth. 2: 5, 6). (3) In 587 B.C., when Jerusalem was conquered, its walls and palaces and the temple were destroyed and large numbers of the inhabitants were carried into exile (2 Kings 24: 18; 2 Chron. 36: 11-21; Jer 52: 1-11). This marks the end of the southern kingdom and begins a time of repentance and longing for the restoration promised by the prophets.

Length of the Captivity

Jeremiah predicted that the captivity would last seventy years (Jer. 25: 11-12; 29: 10, see 2 Chron. 36: 21; Dan. 9: 2; Zech 7: 5). There are two ways of adjusting the dates to show the fulfilment of this prediction. (1) From the first invasion and the carrying into captivity of Daniel and others, 607 B.C. to 537 B.C., when the first company returned under Zerubbabel. (2) From the final fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C., to the completion of the renewed temple and the dedication in 517 B.C. Either satisfies the Scripture statement. In history, it is customary to speak of this exile as covering only the fifty years from 587 B.C., when Jerusalem was destroyed and the last company carried away, to 537 B.C., when the first company returned under Zerubbabel.

Fugitives in Egypt

When Jerusalem fell the king of Babylon allowed many of the poorer people to remain in Palestine, and Gedaliah, a grandson of Josiah, was appointed to rule over them (2 Kings 25: 22). His career was a very useful one, but

through jealousy he was soon murdered (2 Kings 25: 25). Wherefore, many people, fearing lest Nebuchadrezzar would avenge his death, fled into Egypt (2 Kings 25: 26). Jeremiah, at the fall of Jerusalem, declined a safe conduct to Babylon, preferring to remain among the ruins of the land he loved. He attempted to keep his people from going into Egypt (Jer. 42: 9-22), but when he failed to prevent their going, he went along with them and shared their destiny (Jer. 43: 6, 7). They settled at Tahpanhes (Jer. 44: 1), a frontier town, where many foreigners lived under the protection of Egypt. They seem to have built a temple there and to have tried to retain their racial ideals. Jeremiah continued his faithful prophecies and the people continued to reject his counsel. We do not know how he ended his career.

Exiles in Babylon

1. *Their Home and Occupation.* These exiles in Babylon were settled in a rich, fertile plain, on the river or canal, Chebar (Ezek. 1: 1, 3; 3: 15, etc.), which ran southeast from Babylon to Nippur. They were in a land of traffic and merchants and fruitful fields (Ezek. 17: 4, 5) and enjoyed great freedom and prosperity. They were not slaves, but colonists, and by reason of their intellectual and moral superiority they made rapid advancement. Some, like Daniel, obtained high official position, some became skilled workmen, some gave themselves to agriculture and gardening, and some engaged in commercial pursuits and became wealthy.

2. *Their Government and Religion.* For the most part, they were allowed, through the elders of the families who acted as judges, to control their own affairs. At first, they probably held the power of life and death, but later capital cases were punished by authority of Babylon (Jer. 29: 22). Little is said directly concerning religion, but it is clear that they preserved their genealogies, gave up idolatry, abandoned their elaborate ceremonials and public and private sacrifices, conducted private devotion, assembled for prayer and Scripture reading and greatly enlarged the canon of the Scriptures.

Benefits of the Captivity

The Jews, as they are called after this, soon adapted themselves to their new conditions and changed their ideals and beliefs accordingly. The following changes were beneficial. (1) They became so indissolubly united that to this day they are a separate people and resist all disintegrating influence. (2) Idolatry was so thoroughly destroyed that never again has a Jew worshiped idols. (3) A vital sense of repentance was created. Their city had been destroyed and they were in a strange land and they realized that their sins had caused their ruin and that only in repentance could they hope for safety and deliverance. (4) They gained a deeper appreciation of the law of Moses. It was their transgression against that law, especially that against idolatry that had destroyed them. The new respect for law which this gave, resulted in the powerful influence known as Judaism. (5) The synagogue came into being. Since they were deprived of the temple it was needful that their religious and democratic spirit should express itself in some new way. Each community, endeavoring to care for its own needs, met on the Sabbath and conducted a service, consisting of Scripture reading, hymns, prayers, and exhortation, very similar to the present-day church services. They soon built houses for this worship and called them synagogues. When they returned to Palestine they filled the whole land with them. These were a great advantage to Jesus and Paul and other early missionaries in getting a hearing for their message. (6) Religion became more spiritual and personal. The transfer from the temple to the synagogue made it easy to see the more personal and spiritual import of the worship of Jehovah. (7) They saw that God had chosen and trained Israel, that through them He might bless the world and that He, therefore, cares for all and not only for them. (8) There arose a new longing for the Messiah. If they were to bless others and the golden age of Jehovah worship was to come, there must be a great king to lead them. (9) They collected their literature. This period added to the canon of the Scripture the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, the book of Lamentations and chapters 40-44 of Jeremiah and many of the Psalms. In all of this, they had gained a truer and more correct faith and were in a better position to bless the world.

THE PROPHETS OF THE PERIOD

Optimism of the Prophets

The Jews were discouraged by reason of their disappointment and were in danger of attributing their failure to Jehovah. But the prophets came forward and taught them the significance of their suffering and proclaimed hopes for their future. These prophecies were very optimistic. They predicted the coming doom of their oppressors and gave assurances of Judah's restoration glory. There were also frequent prophecies of the salvation of a remnant and glorious Messianic prophecies, all of which were filled with the spirit of optimism. They saw that the golden age of the nation was in the future and not in the past and were enabled to give the highest possible encouragement to Israel in this, their time of distress. In line with this spirit of hope, Jeremiah bought a piece of land when their overthrow by Nebuchadrezzar indicated the absolute loss of all land values. Such a spirit could not fail to encourage the people.

Prophetic Messages

1. *Obadiah and His Message.* This prophecy was occasioned by the joy of the Edomites over the fall of Jerusalem and Judah. It indicates that God's displeasure and judgment rest upon those who rejoice in the calamity of others, and particularly upon those who glory in the misfortunes of God's people. This is said to be a favorite book with the Jews because it pronounces divine wrath and doom upon Edom, the descendants of Esau, who had from the beginning been hostile to Israel. The two outstanding truths of the book are: (1) that Jehovah is especially interested in His chosen people; (2) that He will establish a new kingdom with Judah and Jerusalem as the center and with holiness as its chief characteristic.

2. *The Book of Lamentations.* It was formerly a part of Jeremiah and represents the sorrows of the prophet when the calamities which he had predicted befell his people who had so often rejected him and his message. He chose to live with them in their sufferings, and out of his weeping pointed them to a Star of hope. The book contains five poems or chapters, so well

planned and wrought out that it could not have resulted from some sentimental outburst. The care with which it was written is seen in the number and arrangement of the verses. Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 each have 22 verses or just the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse begins with a letter of the alphabet, beginning at the first and continuing in order to the last. In chapter 3, there are 66 verses, each letter of the alphabet, following their order, beginning three successive verses.

3. *Ezekiel and His Message.* Ezekiel was a man of very powerful intellect, and apparently arose from the better classes of the captives. He was less attractive than Isaiah and less constant in the flow of his thought than Jeremiah. But in his boldness of utterance, he was not surpassed by any of his predecessors. As a prophet he repeats all the great teachings of those who preceded him concerning such matters as justice, morality, and spiritual religion, but manifested less interest in ceremonialism (chap. 6-12; 7, 22: 33: 25). He joins Jeremiah in declaring the moral responsibility of the individual; formulates in considerable detail the doctrines of repentance and forgiveness (14: 1-20; chaps. 18, 33); and proclaims the necessity of a new heart and a new spirit (11: 19; 18: 31; 36: 26). As a priest, he was also of much importance. His Messianic expectation looked to the restoration of the Jews under a theocracy with a complete national system centered in the temple which has the services of both priests and Levites. His plan was intended to promote popular holiness and to correct some of the abuses that had endangered the nation. His methods of teaching differ from those of the other prophets. Allegories, parables, similitudes and visions abound. Some of them are symbolic of future events and others of existing facts and conditions. The meaning of much of it is very obscure, but he brought symbolism and visions to the highest point of development as a means of teaching moral and religious truth. He has been called the father of Judaism, and his services probably preserved Israel's religion during the exile.

4. *Daniel and His Message.* Daniel lived through the whole period of captivity. He early distinguished himself by his stand against the luxury and idolatry of

Babylon and soon rose to a high official position. Four things of a miraculous nature are very important: (1) the interpretation of Nebuchadrezzar's dream which first brought him into prominence; (2) overcoming the power of fire and escaping unhurt when cast into the fiery furnace; (3) his visions of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and of the Kingdom which God would set up and which would abide forever; (4) his escaping alive when cast into a den of lions.

The purpose of the book seems to be: to magnify Jehovah, as the God of all nations; to encourage his countrymen to resist the forces that were threatening to undermine their faith; to prophesy or visualize the whole period from that day to the Messianic period; to outline a religious philosophy of history that would issue in a great world state of everlasting dominion. The main idea is the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God. Compared with former prophetic books, it introduces two new teachings: (1) concerning angels; (2) concerning the resurrection from the dead.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER XV

THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH

Scripture Account: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai,
Zechariah, Malachi.

Preparation for Return

Predictions of the Return.

The Predictions.

Isaiah's Reasons for Expecting the Return.

Rise of The Persian Empire.

The Decree of Cyrus.

Judah Restored

Three Expeditions to Jerusalem.

A Colony Led by Zerubbabel.

A Colony Led by Ezra.

A Colony Led by Nehemiah.

Rebuilding the Temple and Wall.

Rebuilding the Temple.

Rebuilding the Wall.

Reforms of Ezra.

Reforms of Nehemiah.

Significance of the Work of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Other Books of the Period

The Book of Esther.

The Prophets of the Period.

Haggai and His Message.

Zechariah and His Message.

Malachi and His Message.

Special Matters

Contemporary History and Religion.

The History.

The Religion.

Origin of Tradition.

Significance of the Period.

From Malachi to Christ.

The Time and Condition.

Changes Wrought.

History of the Period.

CHAPTER XV

THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH

Scripture Account: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai,
Zechariah, Malachi.

PREPARATION FOR RETURN

Predictions of the Return

1. *The Predictions.* The return from captivity had been prophesied long before the fall of Jerusalem. Several prophets had foretold the captivity, and in connection with it had told of the destruction of Babylon and Judah's restoration, even the length of their exile being announced. While they were in exile they were constantly encouraged by the promised return foretold to them by Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others. It was not only predicted that they would return, but that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt. (1) Restoration at the end of seventy years is predicted (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10; Dan. 9: 2). (2) Other Scriptures for both may be found in Isa. chap. 13; 14: 21, 44—47; Jer. 28: 4, 11, chaps. 50—52; Ezek. chap. 27, etc.)

2. *Isaiah's Reasons for Expecting the Return.* In his prophecy of the return, Isaiah, in chapters 44—48 gives four reasons for his convictions. (1) The incomparable superiority of Jehovah. He is ruler over all physical forces, is superior to the nations that have crushed Israel and to the heathen gods whom they worship; is able to give strength as well as wisdom to all those who trust Him. (2) His past relation to Israel. In former days, he led them and gave them victory over very powerful enemies and, thereby, proved that He is able to deliver them. (3) His unique purpose in Israel. He has chosen and trained her for a great world service. His gracious love for her and her partnership with Him in this divine program insure her forgiveness and final deliverance. (4) The purpose of her suffering. She was to go forth on a mission of helpfulness, to liberate

the captives, to open the eyes of the blind and to teach and inspire all mankind. Her own suffering would enable her to render this service with a proper sympathy.

Rise of the Persian Power

This was a time of world change. Great empires in rapid succession fell under the power of new and rising kingdoms. The Assyrian Empire, which superseded the Chaldean Empire about 1500 B.C., and now loomed so large in the eyes of the world, fell before the combined forces of the Medes and Babylonians, B.C. 607. The Babylonian Empire rose to supremacy and was the dominating power when Judah went into captivity. She was the most splendid kingdom the world had ever seen. But now the Persian power conquered Media and the greater part of Assyria and the Medo-Persian Empire, under Cyrus, conquered Babylon and held almost universal sway at the time of the restoration.

The Decree of Cyrus

More than 150 years earlier, and long before Cyrus was born, Isaiah called him by name and predicted that he should restore God's captive people to their own land. And now in fulfilment of that prophecy God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus and caused him to issue a proclamation for the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple. He gave orders that his people should give the Jews silver, gold and beasts. He restored the vessels of the Lord and instructed the governors along the way to assist Ezra (Ezra 1: 1-4). This fulfilment of the prophecies gave confidence and hope to them and should give to us a deeper appreciation of the divine overruling in all these affairs.

JUDAH RESTORED

Three Expeditions to Jerusalem

In compliance with the edict of Cyrus the return from Babylon was undertaken. It required a long period of time, but it was finally accomplished by three separate detachments under as many different leaders. These are outlined in Ezra and Nehemiah.

1. *A Colony Led by Zerubbabel* (Ezra, chaps. 1—6.) This colony consisted of about fifty thousand whose activities

in the rebuilding and dedication of the temple are fully described. Strong opposition to the rebuilding was encountered and the work was finally stopped. This led to the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah whose books come in between the fourth and fifth chapters of Ezra. The preaching of these prophets together with the influence of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the priest, stimulated the people to renew their building operations and complete the temple.

2. *A Colony Led by Ezra* (Ezra 7: 10). This expedition arrived at Jerusalem nearly eight years after that of Zerubbabel and consisted of eighteen hundred men with their families. Permission to return was given Ezra by Artaxerxes. As a scribe of Moses' law his mission was primarily religious, and as a descendant of Aaron he assumed the office of priest. The former colony had fallen into gross immoralities and unsound religious practices. He rebuked all these sins and brought about a great reformation.

3. *A Colony Led by Nehemiah*. Nehemiah was a cup-bearer to the Persian king, and upon hearing of the distress of his people and of the desolation of Jerusalem he secured permission of the king to go to the beloved city as governor. We do not know the number returning with him, but he became one of the world's greatest reformers. In spite of very determined opposition he was able to repair the wall of the city and to dedicate it with great ceremony (Neh. chapters 6, 12). He corrected many abuses and restored the national life of the Jews and based it upon the written law. His work completes the story of Old Testament history.

Rebuilding of the Temple and Wall

1. *Rebuilding the Temple*. Seven months after Zerubbabel and his company returned, they gathered from their several cities to Jerusalem, and though the temple was destroyed, they renewed on its old site the altar of burnt-offerings and re-established their whole system of temple worship, including the feasts. Some time later they secured workmen and began the work of rebuilding the temple. Incensed because Zerubbabel had refused to allow them to join with him in the rebuilding program, the Samaritans through false representations influenced the king to stop the work. For sixteen years nothing more

was done. During this time they built themselves houses, many of which were very fine compared with the temple. This led them to become satisfied with their condition and they were about to give up the whole temple enterprise. As in our own day too much comfort for self-endangered religious zeal. But the prophets Haggai and Zechariah came forward with their warnings and encouragement and stimulated them to renew their efforts to build the temple, and through the aid of Darius it was finally finished.

2. *Rebuilding the Wall.* This task was accomplished through Nehemiah, who went to Jerusalem, called the people together and inspired them to united action to remove the reproach of the beloved city. All classes entered into the task with a loyalty and co-operation that is most inspiring. Nehemiah was the leader in it all. He made all the plans, directed all the workers, led them in the defense of themselves and conducted all the diplomatic negotiations. He planned the work so as to create a spirit of rivalry and common loyalty and secured both efficiency and protection through the enforcement of military rule. He met and successfully grappled with strong opposition in the form of ridicule, threats, mockery, plots and dangerous false accusations of rebellion. He kept his head and kept busily at work, and in fifty-two days was able to mend all the breaches and finish the wall. The completion of the temple and wall was the occasion of great religious festivities.

Reforms of Ezra

When Ezra arrived at Jerusalem with his expedition he found from information given him by the princes that the people had not separated themselves from the people of the land. Even the priests and Levites had intermarried with them and had done according to their abominations. He saw the serious consequences that would grow out of laxity, and rent his clothes and tore his hair and sat in an attitude of astonishment until the time of evening worship, and then prayed to Jehovah about it. He so impressed the people that he was asked by them to set the situation in order. He then appointed a commission which in the course of three months carried out a most drastic reform, requiring all who had strange wives to be separated from them. The necessity of this

reform, when it is recalled that Nehemiah had been compelled to deal with a very similar condition, indicates the ease and rapidity with which the people fell into these sins.

Reforms of Nehemiah

In chapter five it is recorded that Nehemiah discovered that the Jewish leaders, in spite of their observance of religious ceremonial, were guilty of great cruelty and injustice. The poor had been compelled to sell their children into slavery to the rich and ruling classes and had been required to mortgage their inherited lands to pay their tax. He unsparingly denounced their conduct, caused the law to be read to all the people and had them covenant to keep it. The stirring events recorded here, together with his ability to point them to his own example of keeping the law, mark him as a real reformer and enabled him to accomplish several important reforms. (1) He expelled from the precincts of the temple Tobiah, the Ammonite, who was already known to him to be dangerous to Israel and whose room was needed for storing the tithes brought to the temple for the Levites. (2) He appointed a wise committee, composed of a priest, a scribe and a Levite, to whom was intrusted the task of receiving and distributing these tithes (13: 13). (3) He re-established the Sabbath, causing the people to properly observe it (13: 15-22). (4) He demanded a cessation of marriage with Gentiles (13: 23-27), and thereby aided in keeping pure the blood of the Jews. In all of this he was simply enforcing the law long since recognized among them.

Significance of the Work of Ezra and Nehemiah

The practical effect of the rebuilding of the temple and wall and of these reforms was very great. The Jews were given a new sense of national importance and the community became hopeful, self-respecting and aggressive. Ezra and Nehemiah enforced the moral and social ideals of the earlier prophets and of the ancient law of the fathers, and clearly hoped to prevent Israel from again falling into those sins which had brought upon them their national calamity. In making the temple and its attractive services the center of their life and in providing for the ceremonial purity of all the people, they defined duty

in terms of ceremonial instead of moral conduct. Altogether they greatly increased the number of priests and Levites, added to the temple tax and laid the foundation of that Judaism which was so antagonistic to Christ and His apostles. Nehemiah was so patriotic and zealous, so full of wisdom and friendliness, and so spiritual that he set a new example of devotion for all the laymen of his race and made a profound impression for good upon all later generations.

OTHER BOOKS OF THE PERIOD

The Book of Esther

The story of Esther stands alone in that it has no connection with the other books of the Bible. It contains many surprises and sudden changes. Vashti the queen is suddenly put away and Esther, an unknown Jewish girl, becomes queen. Mordecai is in ill-favor and nigh to execution, but is suddenly exalted by the king and the ceremonies are led by his bitterest enemy. Haman is hung on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. The Jews are all condemned to die, but by permission of the king they destroyed all of their enemies. It is a story of the time of the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon and probably belongs between the sixth and seventh chapters of the book of Ezra. The book throws much light on the condition of the Jews in captivity and also upon the social and political conditions existing in the Persian empire during this time. The deliverance of the Jews from death by the intercessions of Esther was ever afterward commemorated by a great annual feast called Purim.

The Prophets of the Period

Besides Haggai and Zechariah already mentioned Malachi belongs here and closes the Old Testament canon. The social, moral and religious evils which these prophets attack and try to correct, indicate an unhappy state of mind and a national lapse that is not promising for the restored people.

1. *Haggai and His Message.* The purpose of these prophecies was to restore the hope of the people and to stimulate them to finish the temple. By reason of their weakness compared with the great task before them, their zeal had been dulled and they had begun to despair of

seeing their people and the beloved city and temple restored to that glory pictured by former prophets. By four distinct visions, each of which showed their folly in not completing the house of God and gave them promise of the divine presence and blessing, they were aroused to action and, in spite of opposition, finished and dedicated the temple in about four years.

2. *Zechariah and His Message.* Zechariah is a co-laborer with Haggai, beginning two months later and continuing into the second year following him. The book opens with a call to repentance, which is followed by eight visions all of which are calculated to encourage the Jews to finish the temple and to rebuild the city and to re-establish their old religion and government. This is recorded in the first six chapters. Chapters 7 and 8 point out the essential elements of their religion and promise them great exaltation. Chapters 9—14 have to do with matters that lead up to the triumph of the kingdom. The book is distinguished for the symbolic character of its visions, for the large place given to angelic mediation in the intercourse with Jehovah, and for the richness of Messianic prediction found in the latter part.

3. *Malachi and His Message.* It is probably about a hundred years since Haggai and Zechariah did their work. The people had again become sensual and careless of their duty. Failure to realize the Messianic Kingdom immediately upon their return, together with their unfavorable crops and certain inequalities of life which they saw, caused them to grow skeptical (2: 17), and to doubt divine justice. While they had not become idolatrous, vital religion was neglected, true piety was replaced by mere formality and a spirit of worldliness crept into the life of the people. Malachi rebuked the people for departing from the law and called them back to Jehovah. He denounced their impure marriages, their lack of personal godliness, their failure to tithe and their skepticism. He unsparingly condemned the indifference and hypocrisy of their priests. To renew their hopes he foretold the coming of the Messiah and of the forerunner, and described the manner of their coming. As a prophet he was devoted, enthusiastic and fervent, but very formal in method. He was strangely universal in his feelings and rejoiced that Jehovah was being honored in the heathen world (1: 11). He emphasized such great doctrines as the Fatherhood of

God, His holiness, the need of repentance and the prosperity that will follow it, the "day of the Lord" with its judgments and the world-wide future.

SPECIAL MATTERS

Contemporary History and Religion

1. *The History.* It was during the reign of Darius that Zerubbabel finished the temple, and about this time Rome, having now become strong, abolished the kingly government and substituted that of the consuls. About the time Ezra, under the permission of Artaxerxes, was preparing to return to Jerusalem, Cincinnatus was appointed dictator of Rome and the nation that should rule when Christ came was in the ascendancy. The period witnessed fifty one years of war between Persia and Greece, which ended the glory of Persia and ushered Greece into the most brilliant period of her history. Prominent among these wars were the Peloponesian war, which ended in the fall of Athens and set Greece on the way to ruin, and the wars of Carthage, especially that one brought on for securing the island of Sicily, which brought her into contact with Rome and accomplished her ruin. In this time also lived such great men as Pericles, Phidias, Simonides, Pinder, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Lycurgus and Solon. This period saw such great rulers as Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Alexander the Great. China and India, while not touching Israel in any political way, were important countries at this time.

2. *The Religion.* Three other religions are important in this time. (1) Brahminism. This religion had long been established in India and was a system of pantheism which had its sacred books or vedas. (2) Buddhism. About the time of the captivity in Babylon, Brahminism had become so corrupted that a reformation of it was attempted. The result of this is Buddhism, which was adopted by the Hindu people and in the eighth century of the Christian era was driven from India. It became established in Thibet, Ceylon, China and Eastern countries and became the religion of a great portion of the race. (3) Confucianism. While the effort was being made to

reform Brahminism, Confucius was trying to reform Taoism, the national faith of China, and he gave us Confucianism. While making many reforms along the line of morals, he showed the failure of human religions to save people.

Origin of Tradition

The zeal of Ezra in the study of the book of the law gave the people a new devotion, at least for the letter of the law. The reading and expounding of this law became a profession, those following it being called lawyers. Gradually they came to believe that God had communicated to the fathers other laws not written, but known as the "traditions of the elders." These Jesus severely condemned. These traditions soon took precedence over the written law and were collected and written in a book, called the Mishna. Commentaries were written on the Mishna, and the two (Mishna and Commentary together) entirely eliminated the spirit of the law and the prophets, and tended to substitute the form and act for the reality and religious feeling behind it. But, in spite of its one-sided development, Judaism, thus inaugurated by Ezra, preserved a vital and real religious spirit and handed down to us the noblest spiritual treasures known to the race.

Significance of the Period

In all the annals of national life, there is probably not a more significant sweep of history than that of the Jews during the restoration. They are but a fragment of vast empires, but they put their stress upon the true worship of God. It was beginning to dawn upon them that the glory of God would be manifested in some higher and more spiritual sense than had been expected. They had seen the decay of the mightiest material kingdoms, while spiritual Israel lived on, and they were seeing how God and His cause and those whom His power saves cannot die. With the loss of national independence, they became more exclusive. They now hold to the unity and spirituality of God and are the hope of the race. The Old Testament, therefore, closes with the Jews back at their old home, with the temple restored, with the sacred writings gathered together, with the Word of God being taught and with the voice of the living prophet still in the land.

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From Malachi to Christ

1. *The Time and Condition.* After the close of the Old Testament there followed a somewhat varied history of about 400 years before the opening of New Testament history. During this time neither prophet nor inspired historian was found among the Jews and there was no further development of revealed religion. But through it all the Jews were divinely preserved and the blessed hope of the coming Messiah never died out until it was realized in the promised Son of David and Son of God and in His religion of universal love and peace.

2. *Changes Wrought.* Vast changes took place during these four hundred years. There was now a new Jerusalem filled with foreign pleasures, foreign languages and foreign customs. The Hebrews themselves had undergone many and significant changes. At first they were farmers and herdsmen, later they engaged in foreign commerce, but during this period they became traders, a calling which they have held down to our modern era. Beginning with the captivity, changes in their language began to appear. Chaldean, Syrian and Persian forms crept in and when Jesus came the classic language of Abraham and David was a dead language and Aramaic was the speech of Palestine. That there were also religious changes is indicated by the fact that during this time certain religious and politico-religious parties, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, arose to influence.

3. *History of the Period.* During all of this time and throughout the time of Christ and on till the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, the Jews were but a province of some other country except during the brief period of Maccabean independence. For convenience in study the history of the period may be divided into four sections. (1) A Period of Persian Rule, B.C. 445—B.C. 332. (2) A Period of Greek Rule, B.C. 332—B.C. 167. (3) A Period of Hebrew Independence, B.C. 167—B.C. 63. (4) A Period of Roman Rule, B.C. 63—A.D. 70. But the facts of the history of this entire period are best studied as an introduction to the study of New Testament history and hence are not pursued further here.

SPECIMEN QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

Experienced teachers, especially those who are teaching in accredited institutions, may submit for examination, questions of their own choosing. These questions should fairly cover all the chapters in the book, and should be reported, together with the list of names, when awards are requested.

Where classes are composed largely of adults, who may be unaccustomed to close application in text-book study, it may be helpful to relieve anxiety by stating frankly in advance that all questions for examination will be taken from the list below, at least one question being selected from each chapter.

CHAPTER I

1. What are the five periods of Old Testament history? How long does each continue?
2. Tell something of the Old Testament as history.
3. What are the characteristics of the period from the creation to the fall?
4. What are some of the problems solved by the story of creation?
5. Give the elements of the temptation.
6. What were the results of the fall?
7. What elements of hope did God offer the first pair?
8. Give some traditions of the creation; of the fall.

CHAPTER II

9. What is meant by the reign of conscience?
10. Tell the story of the first worship and murder.
11. Describe the antediluvian civilization.
12. How may we explain the long lives of men before the flood?
13. Tell about Noah, God's chosen man.
14. Describe the flood: (1) the Bible narrative, (2) tradition.
15. Tell of the rainbow covenant.

CHAPTER III

16. What is meant by this being a period of human government?
17. Tell something of Noah's shame and of his prophecy.
18. Discuss the tower of Babel, its location, purpose, traditions.
19. What were the two great empires of that time?
20. Tell something of the business organization of the time.
21. What indicates the religious motive of their civilization?

CHAPTER IV

22. What were the conditions at the time of Abraham?
23. Describe the Hebrew civilization.
24. Give the four points setting forth Abraham's call.
25. Discuss the character of Abraham.
26. What were some of Isaac's childhood experiences?
27. Tell the story of Jacob's securing the patriarchal blessing.
28. Discuss the character of Isaac.

CHAPTER V

29. Discuss the name and treachery of Jacob.
30. Tell of Jacob's vision and prayer at Bethel.
31. Outline Jacob's experiences at Haran.
32. Tell the story of his return to Canaan and the meeting with Esau.
33. Describe Joseph's youth in Canaan.
34. Tell something of Joseph as a slave and prisoner in Egypt.
35. Tell how Joseph treated Jacob and his brethren when they came to Egypt.
36. Tell how these stories are typical.
37. Tell something of the book of Job; of the book of Genesis.

CHAPTER VI

38. How is the period of "Struggle for Liberty" characterized?
39. Tell something of the Egyptian life and religion.
40. Discuss the oppression in Egypt under three heads.
41. How did their stay in Egypt affect Israel?
42. Under what three heads is the life of Moses discussed?
43. Discuss Moses' call and task.
44. Describe the contest with Pharaoh; (1) the religious purpose, (2) the problems raised.
45. Tell of the Passover Feast and crossing the Red Sea.
46. Tell of the significance of the deliverance.

CHAPTER VII

47. What are the three lessons of the journey to Sinai?
48. Tell something of Sinai and of the covenant made there.
50. Tell of the reception and purpose of the law.
51. Give the divisions of the law and explain the meaning of each.
52. Name the special factors and agencies of the law.
53. Tell some things happening on the journey to Kadesh-barnea.
54. Describe the pathos of the forty years, and the main experiences of the wilderness wanderings.
55. Tell something of the prophecies of Balaam.
56. Describe the last scene on Moab.
57. Discuss Moses' character and work.
58. Discuss the value of the experiences and the religious changes of the wilderness.

CHAPTER VIII

59. Discuss the geography, inhabitants and neighbors of the land of Canaan.
60. What was the duration and nature of Israel's struggle for a home?
61. Discuss the test of their faith in crossing the Jordan and the fall of Jericho.
62. Tell of the conquering of the land, and of Joshua's last counsel and his death.
63. What is said about the cruelty to the Canaanites?
64. What was the significance of the war of conquest?
65. Tell something of the religious spirit of the time of the conquest.

CHAPTER IX

66. Discuss the characteristics of the time of the Judges.
67. What five dangers threatened Israel during this time.
68. Name six military judges and the enemy each opposed.
69. Discuss the position and work of Eli and Samuel.
70. Name three stories of evil belonging here.
71. Discuss two stories of the purer life given us here.
72. Discuss the ethical standards; the state of religion.

CHAPTER X

73. What conditions existed at the close of the last period, (1) as to religion, (2) as to national life?
74. What led to the demand for a king? What were the principles of the kingdom?
75. Describe Saul's great achievements.
76. Discuss his strength, weakness and decline.
77. Discuss his character and reign.
78. Tell of David's youth and of his experiences at Saul's court.
79. Discuss David as an outlaw chieftain.
80. What are the two divisions of David's reign? Discuss each.
81. Tell of his great sin and its results.
82. What were the three elements of his success.
83. Describe his varied and wonderful life; also his last days.
84. Tell something of the book of Psalms.

CHAPTER XI

85. Tell of Solomon's ascension to the throne.
86. What three things stand out in his official career?
87. Discuss Solomon's policies under three heads.
88. Describe his building enterprises.
89. Tell of his apostasy and of the riddle of his character.
90. Tell of the rise of the prophets.
91. Discuss the three books of Solomon studied here.
92. What were the causes of the division of the Kingdom?
93. Make a comparison of the two kingdoms.

CHAPTER XII

94. Tell something of the books of Kings and Chronicles.
95. State the relation of the two kingdoms and the results of the division.
96. Name the principal events of the history of Judah.
97. Discuss the principal events of the history of Israel. What are the four periods of her history?
98. Tell of Israel's conquest by the Assyrians and of her contribution to the world.
99. Discuss the two greatest non-writing prophets.
100. Tell of the study of the prophets; (1) use of the term prophet, (2) the study in general, (3) predictive prophecy.
101. Tell something of the message of each of the four writing prophets of this period.

CHAPTER XIII

102. What is said of David's influence in Judah?
103. What advantages did Judah have over Israel?
104. What evidence have we of Judah's luxury and intellectual life?
105. Discuss the crimes of Judah's leaders.
106. What three things are discussed under the principal events of this period?
107. Discuss the religious declines and revivals.
108. Discuss the false prophets of this time.
109. Tell something of the prophets; of their teachings.
110. Name the six prophets of this period and tell something of the message of each.

CHAPTER XIV

111. Discuss the general situation and loss of the ten tribes.
112. Tell about the Babylonian Empire at this time.
113. Discuss the captivity; (1) its cause, (2) the captivity itself, (3) its length.
114. Discuss the fugitives in Egypt and the exiles in Babylon.
115. State the benefits of the captivity.
116. Tell of the optimism of the prophets.
117. Discuss the messages of each of the four prophets of this period.

CHAPTER XV

118. Discuss the predictions of the return and Isaiah's reasons.
119. Describe the rise of the Persian power and the decree of Cyrus.
120. Discuss three expeditions returning to Jerusalem.
121. Tell of the rebuilding of the temple.
122. Describe the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah.
123. What significance attaches to the work of Ezra and Nehemiah?
124. Discuss the book of Esther.
125. Discuss the messages of the three prophets of the restoration days.
126. Tell something of the contemporary history and religion.
127. Tell of the origin of tradition and the significance of this period.

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